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WORKS

OF

THOMAS CHALMERS, D.D. & LL.D.

PROFESSOR OF THEOLOGY IN THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH,

AND CORRESPONDING MEMBER OF THE ROYAL INSTITUTE OF FRANCE.

VOLUME ELEVENTH.

GLASGOW:

WILLIAM COLLINS, 7, S. FREDERICK ST.

LONDON: HAMILTON, ADAMS, & CO.

SERMONS

PREACHED ON PUBLIC OCCASIONS.

BY

THOMAS CHALMERS, D.D. & LL.D.

PROFESSOR OF THEOLOGY IN THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH,

AND CORRESPONDING MEMBER OF THE ROYAL INSTITUTE OF FRANCE

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PREFACE.

A NUMBER of the Sermons in this Volume were preached at the request of the Directors of certain Religious and Charitable Societies, chiefly with the view of obtaining contributions in aid of the funds of these Institutions. The other Discourses were delivered on public occasions, connected with some important events, either of great national or local interest. The occasions and objects for which they were preached are generally explained in Prefaces prefixed to the respective Sermons, and Appendices are in several instances added still further to illustrate their nature and design. Independently of the immediate objects the delivery of the Sermons were intended to serve, they were also designed to illustrate some great leading truths or principles connected with the objects of Christian philanthropy, or with those events, whether of a more public or private nature, which called them forth, with the view of giving a wise and salutary direction to the public mind in prosecuting the various objects of benevolence, or of improving those solemn and important events of Providence which form striking eras in the history of our country or of our church.

PRINCETON
THEOLOGICAL
SEMINARY

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ON THE DEATH OF THE PRINCESS CHARLOTTE OF WALES:

A

SERMON

DELIVERED IN

THE TRON CHURCH, GLASGOW,

ON

WEDNESDAY, NOV. 19TH, 1817,

THE

DAY OF THE FUNERAL OF HER ROYAL HIGHNESS

THE

PRINCESS CHARLOTTE OF WALES

PREFATORY NOTICE.

I REPUBLISH this Sermon chiefly for the sake of the Advertisement prefixed, and the Appendix subjoined to it. In regard to the former, I take this opportunity of recording, after the experience of twenty-one years, that the perpetual misinterpretation laid on the conduct of clergymen by politicians, forms one of the most prolific sources of that injustice to which our profession is exposed. The Appendix I am particularly anxious to preserve—as an evidence, that in 1817, not only was the argument for a National Church propounded, which has since become familiar to statesmen as well as to ecclesiastics, but that then it was when that suggestion for the extension of our Establishment was made, which, now that it is being acted on, is branded by its opponents as a monstrous and unheard of novelty.

T. C.

ADVERTISEMENT.

The following Sermon is the fruit of a very hurried and unlooked for exertion—and never was there any publication brought forward under circumstances of greater reluctancy, and with a more honest feeling of unpreparedness on the part of the author. The truth is, that he was at a great distance from home, when the urgency of the public demand for his personal appearance on the nineteenth of November reached him; and that so late, that he had no other resource than to write for the pulpit during the intervals, and after the exhaustion of a very rapid and fatiguing journey. It is true that he might revise. But to revise such a composition, would be to re-make it; and he has chosen rather to bring it forward, and that as nearly as possible in the literal terms of its delivery.

But it may be asked, if so unfit for the public eye, why make it public? It may be thought by many, that the avowal is not a wise one. But wisdom ought never to be held in reverence separately from truth; and it would be disguising the real motive, were it concealed, that a very perverse misconception which has gone abroad respecting one passage of the Sermon, and which has found its way into many of the Newspapers, is the real and impelling cause of the step that has been taken; and that, had it not been for the spread of such a misconception, there never would have been obtruded on

the public, a performance written on a call of urgent necessity, and most assuredly without the slightest anticipation of authorship.

But, it may be said, does not such a measure as this bring the pulpit into a state of the most degrading subordination to the diurnal press—since there is not a single sermon which cannot be so reported, as, without the literality of direct falsehood, to convey through the whole country all the injuries of a substantial misrepresentation? And if a minister should condescend publicly to notice every such random and ephemeral statement, he might thereby incessantly involve himself in the most helpless and harassing of all controversy.

Now, in opposition to this, let it be observed, that a person placed in this difficult and disagreeable predicament, may advert for once to such a provocation, and that for the express purpose, that he may never have to do it again. He may count it enough to make one decisive exposure of the injustice which can be done in this way to a public instructor, and then hold himself acquitted of every similar attempt in all time coming. He thereby raises a sort of abiding or monumental antidote, which may serve to neutralize the mischief of any future attack, or future insinuation. By this one act, though he may not silence the obloquies of the daily press, he has at least purchased for himself the privilege of standing unmoved by all the mistakes, or by all the malignities which may proceed from it.

Yet, it is no more than justice to a numerous and very important class of writers, to state it as our conviction of the great majority of them, that they feel the dignity and responsibility of their office; and hold it to be the highest point of professional honour, ever to

maintain the most gentlemanly avoidance of all that is calculated to wound the feelings of an unoffending individual.

There is one temptation, however, to which the Editors of this department of literature are peculiarly liable, which may be briefly adverted to; and the influence of which may be observed to extend even to a higher class of journalists. There is an eagerness to transmute every thing into metal of their own peculiar currency —there is an extreme avidity to lay hold of every utterance; and to send it abroad, tinged with the colouring of their own party—there is a ravenous desire of appropriation extending itself to every possible occurrence, and to every one individual whom they would like to enlist under the banners of their own partisanship; which, for their own credit, they would be more careful to repress, did they perceive with sufficient force, and sufficient distinctness, that it makes them look more like the desperadoes of a sinking cause, than the liberal and honest expounders of the politics and the literature, which when rightly treated claim so respectable a portion of the intelligence of the country.

The writer of this Sermon has only to add, that he does not know how a sorer imputation could have been devised against the heart and the principles of a clergyman, than that, on the tender and hallowed day of a nation's repose from all the sordidness and all the irritations of party, he should have made the pulpit a vehicle of invective against any administration; or that, after mingling his tears with those of his people, over the untimely death of one so dear to us, he should have found room for any thing else than those lessons of general Christianity, by which an unsparing reproof is ministered to impiety, in whatever quarter it may

be found—even that impiety which wears the very same features, and offers itself in the very same aspect, under all administrations.

He has subjoined an Appendix, on the subject of an extended ecclesiastical provision for the town of Glasgow, and regrets, that he is not in such circumstances of leisure, as to allow of a more full and elaborate exertion on a topic so important.

PROPERTY OF
PRINCETON
THEOLOGICAL
SEMINARY

SERMON I.

ON THE DEATH OF HER ROYAL HIGHNESS THE PRINCESS CHARLOTTE OF WALES.

"For when thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness."—Isa. xxvi. 9.

I am sorry that I shall not be able to extend the application of this text beyond its more direct and immediate bearing on that event on which we are now met to mingle our regrets, and our sensibilities, and our prayers—that, occupied as we all are with the mournful circumstance that has bereft our country of one of its brightest anticipations, I shall not be able to clear my way to the accomplishment of what is, strictly speaking, the congregational object of an address from the pulpit, which ought, in every possible case, to be an address to the conscience—that, therefore, instead of the concerns of personal Christianity, which, under my present text, I might, if I had space for it, press home upon the attention of my hearers, I shall be under the necessity of restricting myself to that more partial application of the text which relates to the matters of public Christianity. It is upon this account, as well as upon others, that I rejoice in the present appointment, for the improvement of that sad and

sudden visitation which has so desolated the hearts and the hopes of a whole people. I therefore feel more freedom in coming forward with such remarks as, to the eyes of many, may wear a more public and even political complexion, than is altogether suited to the ministrations of the Sabbath. And yet I cannot but advert, and that in such terms of reproof as I think to be most truly applicable, to another set of men, whose taste for preaching is very much confined to these great and national occasions—who, habitually absent from church on the Sabbath, are yet observed, and that most prominently, to come together in eager and clustering attendance, on some interesting case of pathos or of politics—who in this way obtrude upon the general notice, their loyalty to an earthly sovereign, while, in reference to their Lord and Master, Jesus Christ, they scandalize all that is Christian in the general feeling, by their manifest contempt for Him and for His ordinances—who look for the ready compliance of ministers, in all that can gratify their inclinations for pageantry, while for the real effective and only important business of ministers, they have just as little reverence as if it were all a matter of hollow and insignificant parade. It is right to share in the triumphs of successful, and to shed the tears of afflicted, patriotism. But it is also right to estimate according to its true character, the patriotism of those who are never known to offer one homage to Christianity, except when it is associated with the affairs of state; or with the wishes, and the commands, and the expectations of statesmen.

But the frivolous and altogether despicable taste of the men to whom I am alluding, must be entirely separated from such an occasion as the present. For, in truth, there never was an occasion of such magnitude, and at the same time of such peculiarity. There never was an occasion on which a matter of deep political interest was so blended and mixed up with matter of very deep and affecting tenderness. It does not wear the aspect of an affair of politics at all, but of an affair of the heart; and the novel exhibition is now offered, of all party irritations merging into one common and overwhelming sensibility. Oh! how it tends to quiet the agitations of every earthly interest and earthly passion, when Death steps forward and demonstrates the littleness of them all—when he stamps a character of such affecting insignificance on all that we are contending for—when, as if to make known the greatness of his power in the sight of a whole country, he stalks in ghastly triumph over the might and the grandeur of its most august family, and singling out that member of it on whom the dearest hopes and the gayest visions of the people were suspended, he, by one fatal and resistless blow, sends abroad the fame of his victory and his strength, throughout the wide extent of an afflicted nation. He has indeed put a cruel and impressive mockery on all the glories of mortality. A few days ago, all looked so full of life, and promise, and security—when we read of the bustle of the great preparation—and were told of the skill and the talent that were pressed into the service—and heard of the goodly attendance of the most eminent

in the nation—and how officers of state, and the titled dignitaries of the land, were chariotted in splendour to the scene of expectation, as to the joys of an approaching holiday—yes, and we were told too, that the bells of the surrounding villages were all in readiness for the merry peal of gratulation, and that the expectant metroplis of our empire, on tiptoe for the announcement of her future monarch, had her winged couriers of dispatch to speed the welcome message to the ears of her citizens, and that from her an embassy of gladness was to travel over all the provinces of the land; and the country, forgetful of all that she had suffered, was at length to offer the spectacle of one wide and rejoicing jubilee. O Death! thou hast indeed chosen the time and the victim, for demonstrating the grim ascendancy of thy power over all the hopes and fortunes of our species!—Our blooming Princess, whom fancy had decked with the coronet of these realms, and under whose gentle sway all bade so fair for the good and the peace of our nation, has he placed upon her bier! And, as if to fill up the measure of his triumph, has he laid by her side, that babe, who, but for him, might have been the monarch of a future generation; and he has done that, which by no single achievement he could otherwise have accomplished—he has sent forth over the whole of our land, the gloom of such a bereavement as cannot be replaced by any living descendant of royalty—he has broken the direct succession of the monarchy of England—by one and the same disaster, has he wakened up the public anxieties of the country, and sent a pang

as acute as that of the most woful domestic visitation, into the heart of each of its families.

In the prosecution of the following discourse, as I have already stated, I shall satisfy myself with a very limited application of the text. I shall, in the first place, offer a few remarks on that branch of the righteousness of practical Christianity, which consists in the duty that subjects owe to their governors. And, in the second place, I shall attempt to improve the present great national disaster, to the object of impressing upon you, that, under all our difficulties and all our fears, it is the righteousness of the people alone which will exalt and perpetuate the nation; and that, therefore, if this great interest be neglected, the country, instead of reaping improvement from the judgments of God, is in imminent danger of being utterly overwhelmed by them.

I. But here let me attempt the difficult task of rightly dividing the Word of Truth—and premise this head of discourse, by admitting, that I know nothing more hateful than the crouching spirit of servility. I know not a single class of men more unworthy of reverence, than the base and interested minions of a court. I know not a set of pretenders who more amply deserve to be held out to the chastisement of public scorn, than they who, under the guise of public principle, are only aiming at personal aggrandizement. This is one corruption. But let us not forget that there is another—even a spurious patriotism, which would proscribe loyalty as one of the virtues altogether. Now, I cannot

open my Bible, without learning that loyalty is one branch of the righteousness of practical Christianity. I am not seeking to please men but God, when I repeat His words in your hearing—that you should honour the King—that you should obey Magistrates—that you should meddle not with those who are given to change—that you should be subject to principalities and powers—that you should lead a quiet and a peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. This, then, is a part of the righteousness which it is our business to teach, and sure I am that it is a part of righteousness which the judgment now dealt out to us, should, of all others, dispose you to learn. I know not a virtue more in harmony with the present feelings and afflictions and circumstances of the country, than that of a steadfast and determined loyalty. The time has been, when such an event as the one that we are now assembled to deplore, would have put every restless spirit into motion, and set a guilty ambition upon its murderous devices, and brought powerful pretenders with their opposing hosts of vassalage into the field, and enlisted towns and families under the rival banners of a most destructive fray of contention, and thus have broken up the whole peace and confidence of society. Let us bless God that these days of barbarism are now gone by. But the vessel of the state is still exposed to many agitations. The sea of politics is a sea of storms, on which the gale of human passions would make her founder, were it not for the guidance of human principle; and, therefore, the truest policy of a nation is to Christianize her sub-

jects, and to disseminate among them the influence of religion. The most skilful arrangement for rightly governing a state, is to scatter among the governed, not the terrors of power—not the threats of jealous and alarmed authority—not the demonstrations of sure and ready vengeance held forth by the rigour of an offended law. These may, at times, be imperiously called for. But a permanent security against the wild outbreakings of turbulence and disaster, is only to be attained by diffusing the lessons of the gospel throughout the great mass of our population—even those lessons which are utterly and diametrically at antipodes with all that is criminal and wrong in the spirit of political disaffection. The only radical counteraction to this evil is to be found in the spirit of Christianity; and though animated by such a spirit, a man may put on the intrepidity of one of the old prophets, and denounce even in the ear of royalty the profligacies which may disgrace or deform it—though animated by such a spirit, he may lift his protesting voice in the face of an unchristian magistracy, and tell them of their errors—though animated by such a spirit, he, to avoid every appearance of evil, will neither stoop to the flattery of power, nor to the solicitations of patronage—and though all this may bear to the superficial eye, a hard, and repulsive, and hostile aspect towards the established dignities of the land—yet forget not, that if a real and honest principle of Christianity lie at the root of this spirit, there exists within the bosom of such a man, a foundation of principle, on which all the lessons of Christianity will rise into visible and consistent

exemplification. And it is he, and such as he, who will turn out to be the salvation of the country, when the hour of her threatened danger is approaching—and it is just in proportion as you spread and multiply such a character, that you raise within the bosom of the nation the best security against all her fluctuations—and, as in every other department of human concerns, so will it be found, that, in this particular department, Christians are the salt of the earth, and Christianity the most copious and emanating fountain of all the guardian virtues of peace, and order, and patriotism.

The judgment under which we now labour, supplies, I think, one touching, and, to every good and Christian mind, one powerful argument of loyalty. It is the distance of the prince from his people which feeds the political jealousy of the latter, and which by removing the former to a height of inaccessible grandeur, places him, as it were, beyond the reach of their sympathies. Much of that political rancour, which festers, and agitates, and makes such a tremendous appearance of noise and of hostility in our land, is due to the aggravating power of distance. If two of the deadliest political antagonists in our country, who abuse, and vilify, and pour forth their stormy eloquence on each other, whether in parliament or from the press, were actually to come into such personal and familiar contact, as would infuse into their controversy the sweetening of mere acquaintanceship, this very circumstance would disarm and do away almost all their violence. The truth is, that when one man rails against another across the table of a legislative

assembly, or when he works up his fermenting imagination, and pens his virulent sentences against another, in the retirement of a closet—he is fighting against a man at a distance—he is exhausting his strength against an enemy whom he does not know—he is swelling into indignation, and into all the movements of what he thinks right and generous principle, against a chimera of his own apprehension; and a similar re-action comes back upon him from the quarter that he has assailed, and thus the controversy thickens, and the delusion every day gets more impenetrable, and the distance is ever widening, and the breach is always becoming more hopeless and more irreparable; and all this between two men, who, if they had been in such accidental circumstances of juxtaposition, as could have let them a little more into one another's feelings, and to one another's sympathies, would at least have had all the asperities of their difference smoothed away by the mere softenings and kindlinesses of ordinary human intercourse.

Now, let me apply this remark to the mutual state of sentiment which obtains between the different orders of the community. Amongst the rich, there is apt at times to rankle an injurious and unworthy impression of the poor—and just because these poor stand at a distance from them—just because they come not into contact with that which would draw them out in courteousness to their persons, and in benevolent attentions to their families. Amongst the poor, on the other hand, there is often a disdainful suspicion of the wealthy, as if they were actuated by a proud indifference to them and to

their concerns, and as if they were placed away from them at so distant and lofty an elevation as not to require the exercise of any of those cordialities, which are ever sure to spring in the bosom of man to man, when they come to know each other, and to have the actual sight of each other. But, let any accident place an individual of the higher before the eyes of the lower order, on the ground of their common humanity—let the latter be made to see that the former are akin to themselves in all the sufferings and in all the sensibilities of our common inheritance—let, for example, the greatest chieftain of the territory die, and the report of his weeping children, or of his distracted widow, be sent through the neighbourhood—or, let an infant of his family be in suffering, and the mothers of the humble vicinity be run to for counsel and assistance—or, in any other way, let the rich, instead of being viewed by their inferiors through the dim and distant medium of that fancied interval which separates the ranks of society, be seen as heirs of the same frailty, and as dependent on the same sympathies with themselves—and, at that moment, all the flood-gates of honest sympathy will be opened —and the lowest servants of the establishment will join in the cry of distress which has come upon their family—and the neighbouring cottagers, to share in their grief, have only to recognise them as the partakers of one nature, and to perceive an assimilation of feelings and of circumstances between them.

Let me further apply all this to the sons and the daughters of royalty. The truth is, that they

appear to the public eye as stalking on a platform so highly elevated above the general level of society, that it removes them, as it were, from all the ordinary sympathies of our nature. And though we read at times of their galas, and their birth-days, and their drawing-rooms, there is nothing in all this to attach us to their interests and their feelings, as the inhabitants of a familiar home—as the members of an affectionate family. Surrounded as they are with the glare of a splendid notoriety, we scarcely recognise them as men and as women, who can rejoice, and weep, and pine with disease, and taste the sufferings of mortality, and be oppressed with anguish, and love with tenderness, and experience in their bosoms the same movements of grief or of affection that we do ourselves. And thus it is, that they labour under a real and heavy disadvantage. There is not, in their case, the counteraction of that kindly influence, to alleviate the weight or the malignity of prejudice, which men of a humbler station are ever sure to enjoy. In the case of a man whose name is hardly known beyond the limits of his personal acquaintance, the tale of calumny that is raised against him extends not far beyond these limits; and, therefore, wherever it is heard, it meets with a something to blunt and to soften it, in those very cordialities which the familiar exhibition of him as a brother of our common nature is fitted to awaken. But it is not so with those in the elevated walks of society. Their names are familiar where their persons are unknown ; and whatever malignity may attach to the one, circulates abroad, and is spread far beyond the limits of their possible inter-

course with human beings, and meets with no kindly counteraction from our acquaintance with the other. And this may explain how it is, that the same exalted personage may, at one and the same time, be suffering under a load of most unmerited obloquy from the wide and the general public, and be to all his familiar domestics an object of the most enthusiastic devotedness and regard.

Now, if through an accidental opening, the public should be favoured with a domestic exhibition—if, by some overpowering visitation of Providence upon an illustrious family, the members of it should come to be recognised as the partakers of one common humanity with ourselves—if, instead of beholding them in their gorgeousness as princes, we look to them in the natural evolution of their sensibilities as men—if the stately palace should be turned into a house of mourning—in one word, if death should do what he has already done, —he has met the Princess of England in the prime and promise of her days, and as she was moving onward on her march to a hereditary throne, he has laid her at his feet! Ah! my brethren, when the imagination dwells on that bed where the remains of departed youth and departed infancy are lying—when, instead of crowns and canopies of grandeur, it looks to the forlorn husband, and the weeping father, and the human feelings which agitate their bosom, and the human tears which flow down their cheeks, and all such symptoms of deep affliction as bespeak the workings of suffering and dejected nature—what ought to be, and what actually is, the feeling of the country at so sad an

exhibition? It is just the feeling of the domestics and the labourers at Claremont. All is soft and tender as womanhood. Nor is there a peasant in our land, who is not touched to the very heart when he thinks of the unhappy Stranger who is now spending his days in grief and his nights in sleeplessness—as he mourns alone in his darkened chamber, and refuses to be comforted—as he turns in vain for rest to his troubled feelings, and cannot find it—as he gazes on the memorials of an affection that blessed the brightest, happiest, shortest year of his existence—as he looks back on the endearments of the by-gone months, and the thought that they have for ever fleeted away from him, turns all to agony—as he looks forward on the blighted prospect of this world's pilgrimage, and feels that all which bound him to existence, is now torn irretrievably away from him! There is not a British heart that does not feel to this interesting visitor, all the force and all the tenderness of a most affecting relationship; and, go where he may, will he ever be recognised and cherished as a much-loved member of the British family.

It is in this way, that through the avenue of a nation's tenderness, we can estimate the strength and the steadfastness of a nation's loyalty. On minor questions of the constitution, we may storm, and rave, and look at each other a little ferociously—and it was by some such appearance as this, that he, who, in the days of his strength, was the foullest and the most formidable of all our enemies, said of the country in which we live, that, torn by factions, it was going rapidly to dissolution. Yet

these are but the skirmishings of a pettier warfare—the movements of nature and of passion, in a land of freemen—the harmless contests of men pulling in opposite ways at some of the smaller ropes in the tackling of our great national vessel. But look to these men, in the time of need and the hour of suffering—look to them now, when in one great and calamitous visitation, the feeling of every animosity is overborne—look to them now, when the darkness is gathering, and the boding cloud of disaster hangs over us, and some chilling fear of insecurity is beginning to circulate in whispers through the land—look to them now, when in the entombment of this sad and melancholy day, the hopes of more than half a century are to be interred—look to them now, when from one end of the country to the other, there is the mourning of a very great and sore lamentation, so that all who pass by may say, this is a grievous mourning to the people of the land. Oh! is it possible that these can be other than honest tears, or that tears of pity can, on such an emergency as the present, be other than tears of patriotism! Who does not see this principle sitting in visible expression on the general countenance of the nation—that the people are sound at heart, and that with this, as the main-sheet of our dependence, we may still, under the blessing of God, weather and surmount all the difficulties which threaten us.

II. I now proceed to the second head of discourse, under which I was to attempt such an improvement of this great national disaster, as might

enforce the lesson, that, under every fear and every difficulty, it is the righteousness of the people alone which will exalt and perpetuate a nation; and that, therefore, if this great interest be neglected, instead of learning any thing from the judgments of God, we are in imminent danger of being utterly overwhelmed by them.

Under my first head I restricted myself exclusively to the virtue of loyalty, which is one of the special, but I most willingly admit, nay, and most earnestly contend, is also one of the essential attributes of righteousness. But there is a point on which I profess myself to be altogether at issue with a set of men, who composed, at one time, whatever they do now, a very numerous class of society. I mean those men, who, with all the ostentation, and all the intolerance of loyalty, evinced an utter indifference either to their own personal religion or to the religion of the people who were around them—who were satisfied with the single object of keeping the neighbourhood in a state of political tranquillity—who, if they could only get the population to be quiet, cared not for the extent of profaneness or of profligacy that was amongst them—and who, while they thought to signalize themselves in the favour of their earthly king, by keeping down every turbulent or rebellious movement among his subjects, did in fact, by their own conspicuous example, lead them and cheer them on in their rebellion against the King of heaven—and, as far as the mischief could be wrought by the contagion of their personal influence, these men of loyalty did what in them lay, to spread a practical

contempt for Christianity, and for all its ordinances, throughout the land.

Now, I would have such men to understand, if any such there be within the sphere of my voice, that it is not with their loyalty that I am quarreling. I am only telling them, that this single attribute of righteousness will never obtain a steady footing in the hearts of the people, except on the ground of a general principle of righteousness. I am telling them, how egregiously they are out of their own politics, in ever thinking that they can prop the virtue of loyalty in a nation, while they are busily employed, by the whole instrumentality of their example and of their doings, in sapping the very foundation upon which it is reared. I am telling them, that if they wish to see loyalty in perfection, and such loyalty, too, as requires not any scowling vigilance of theirs to uphold it, they must look to the most moral, and orderly, and Christianized districts of the country. I am merely teaching them a lesson, of which they seem to be ignorant, that if you loosen the hold of Christianity over the hearts of the population, you pull down from their ascendancy all the virtues of Christianity, of which loyalty is one. Yes, and I will come yet a little closer, and take a look of that loyalty which exists in the shape of an isolated principle in their own bosoms. I should like to gauge the dimensions of this loyalty of theirs, in its state of disjunction from the general principle of Christianity. I wish to know the kind of loyalty which characterizes the pretenders to whom I am alluding—the men who have no value for preaching, but as it stands asso-

ciated with the pageantry of state—the men who would reckon it the most grievous of all heresies, to be away from church on some yearly day of the king's appointment, but are seldom within its walls on the weekly day of God's appointment—the men who, if ministers were away from their post of loyalty, on an occasion like the present, would, without mercy, and without investigation, denounce them as suspicious characters; but who, when we are at the post of piety, dispensing the more solemn ordinances of Christianity, openly lead the way in that crowded and eager emigration, which carries half the rank and opulence of the town away from us. What, oh! what is the length, and the breadth, and the height, and the depth of this vapouring, swaggering, high-sounding loyalty?—It is nothing better than the loyalty of political subalterns, in the low game of partizanship, or of whippers-in to an existing administration—it is not the loyalty which will avail us in the day of danger—it is not to them that we need to look, in the evil hour of a country's visitation;—but to those right-hearted, sound-thinking, Christian men, who, without one interest to serve, or one hope to forward, honour their king, because they fear their God.

Let me assure such a man, if such a man there is within the limits of this assembly—that, keen as his scent may be after political heresies, the deadliest of all such heresies lies at his own door—that there is not to be found, within the city of our habitation, a rottener member of the community than himself—that, withering as he does by his example the principle which lies at the root of all national pros-

perity, it is he, and such as he, who stands opposed to the best and the dearest objects of loyalty—and, if ever that shall happen, which it is my most delightful confidence that God will avert from us and from our children's children to the latest posterity —if ever the wild frenzy of revolution shall run through the ranks of Britain's population, these are the men who will be the most deeply responsible for all its atrocities and for all its horrors.*

Having thus briefly adverted to one of the causes

* I cannot but advert here to a delicate impediment which lies in the way of the faithful exercise of the ministerial functions, from the existence of two great political parties, which would monopolize between them, all the sentiments and all the services of the country. Is it not a very possible thing, that the line of demarcation between these parties may not coalesce throughout all its extent, with the sacred and immutable line of distinction between right and wrong?—and ought not this latter line to stand out so clearly and so prominently to the eye of the Christian minister, that, in the act of dealing around him the reproofs and the lessons of Christianity, the former line should be away from his contemplation altogether? But it is thus that, with the most scrupulous avoidance both of the one and the other species of partizanship, he may in the direct and conscientious discharge of the duties of his office, deliver himself in such a way as to give a kind of general and corporate offence to one political denomination; and, what is still more grievous, as to be appropriated by the men of another denomination, with whom in their capacity as politicians he desires no fellowship whatever, and whose applauses of him in this capacity are in every way most odious and insufferable.

It appears to us, that a Christian minister cannot keep himself in the true path of consistency at all, without refusing to each of the parties all right of appropriation. Their line of demarcation is not his line. Their objects are not his objects. He asks no patronage from the one—he asks no favour from the other, except that they shall not claim kindred with him. He may suffer, at times, from the intolerance of the unworthy underlings of the former party; but never will his sensations of distaste, for the whole business of party politics, become so intense and so painful, as when the hosannahs of the latter party threaten to rise around him.

We often hear from each, and more particularly from one of these parties, of the virtue and the dignity of independence. The only way, it appears to us, in which a man can sustain the true and

of impiety and consequent disloyalty, I shall proceed to offer a few remarks on the great object of teaching the people righteousness, not so much in a general and didactic manner, as in the way of brief, and, if possible, of memorable illustration—gathering my argument from the present event, and availing myself, at the same time, of such principles as have been advanced in the course of the preceding observations.

My next remark, then, on this subject, will be taken from a sentiment, of which I think you must

complete character of independence, is to be independent of both. He who cares for neither of them, is the only independent man; and to him only belongs the privilege of crossing and re-crossing their factitious line of demarcation, just as he feels himself impelled by the high paramount and subordinating principles of the Christianity which he professes. In the exercise of this privilege, I here take the opportunity of saying, that if the chastisement of public scorn should fall on those who, under the disguise of public principle, have *found* a personal aggrandizement for themselves, it should fall with equal severity on those who, under the same disguise, are *seeking* for precisely the same object—that if there be some men in the country who care not for the extent of profaneness and profligacy that is among the people, provided they can only keep them *quiet*, there are also some men who care not for their profaneness or their profligacy, provided they can only keep them *unquiet*—who bear no other regard to the people than merely as an instrument of annoyance against an existing administration—who can shed their serpent tears over their distresses, and yet be inwardly grieved, should either a favourable season or reviving trade disappoint their boding speculation—who, in the face of undeniable common sense, can ascribe to political causes, such calamities as are altogether due to what is essential and uncontrollable in the circumstances of the country—and who, if on the strength of misrepresentation and artifice they could only succeed in effecting the great object of their own instalment into office, and the dispossession of their antagonists, would prove themselves then, to be as indifferent to the comfort, as they show themselves now, to be utterly indifferent to the religion and the virtue of the country's population.

But turning away from the beggarly elements of such a competition as this, let us remark, that, on the one hand, a religious

all on the present occasion feel the force and the propriety. Would it not have been most desirable could the whole population of the city have been admitted to join in the solemn services of the day? Do you not think that they are precisely such services as would have spread a loyal and patriotic influence amongst them? Is it not experimentally the case, that, over the untimely grave of our fair Princess, the meanest of the people would have shed as warm and plentiful a tribute of honest sensibility as the most refined and delicate amongst

administration will never take offence at a minister who renders a pertinent reproof to any set of men, even though they should happen to be their own agents or their own underlings; and that, on the other hand, a minister who is actuated by the true spirit of his office, will never so pervert or so prostitute its functions, as to descend to the humble arena of partizanship. He is the faithful steward of such things as are profitable for reproof, and for doctrine, and for correction, and for instruction in righteousness. His single object with the men who are within reach of his hearing is, that they shall come to the knowledge of the truth and be saved. In the fulfilment of this object, he is not the servant of any administration—though he certainly renders such a service to the state as will facilitate the work of governing to all administrations—as will bring a mighty train of civil and temporal blessings along with it—and in particular, as will diffuse over the whole sphere of his influence, a loyalty as steadfast as the friends of order, and as free from every taint of political servility, as the most genuine friends of freedom can desire.

There is only one case in which it is conceived that the partizanship of a Christian minister, is at all justifiable. Should the government of our country ever fall into the hands of an infidel or demi-infidel administration—should the men at the helm of affairs, be the patrons of all that is unchristian in the sentiment and literature of the country—should they offer a violence to its religious establishments, and thus attempt what we honestly believe would reach a blow to the piety and the character of our population—then, I trust that the language of partizanship will resound from many of the pulpits of the land—and that it will be turned in one stream of pointed invective against such a ministry as this—till, by the force of public opinion, it be swept away, as an intolerable nuisance, from the face of our kingdom.

us? And, I ask, is it not unfortunate, that, on the day of such an affecting, and, if I may so style it, such a national exercise, there should not have been twenty more churches with twenty more ministers, to have contained the whole crowd of eager and interested listeners? A man of mere loyalty, without one other accomplishment, will, I am sure, participate in a regret so natural; but couple this regret with the principle, that the only way in which the loyalty of the people can effectually be maintained, is on the basis of their Christianity, and then the regret in question embraces an object still more general—and well were it for us, if, amid the insecurity of families, and the various fluctuations of fortune and of arrangement that are taking place in the highest walks of society, the country were led, by the judgment with which it has now been visited, to deepen the foundation of all its order and of all its interests in the moral education of its people. Then indeed the text would have its literal fulfilment. When the judgments of God are in the earth, the rulers of the world would lead the inhabitants thereof to learn righteousness.

In our own city, much in this respect remains to be accomplished; and I speak of the great mass of our city and suburb population, when I say, that through the week they lie open to every rude and random exposure—and when Sabbath comes, no solemn appeal to the conscience, no stirring recollections of the past, no urgent calls to resolve against the temptations of the future, come along with it. It is undeniable, that within the compass

of a few square miles, the daily walk of the vast majority of our people is beset with a thousand contaminations; and whether it be on the way to the market, or on the way to the work-shop, or on the way to the crowded manufactory, or on the way to any one resort of industry that you choose to condescend upon, or on the way to the evening home, where the labours of a virtuous day should be closed by the holy thankfulness of a pious and affectionate family; be it in passing from one place to another, or be it amid all the throng of sedentary occupations; there is not one day of the six, and not one hour of one of these days, when frail and unsheltered man is not plied by the many allurements of a world lying in wickedness—when evil communications are not assailing him with their corruptions—when the full tide of example does not bear down upon his purposes, and threaten to sweep all his purity and all his principle away from him. And when the seventh day comes, where, I would ask, are the efficient securities that ought to be provided against all those inundations of profligacy which rage without control through the week, and spread such a desolating influence among the morals of the existing generation?—O! tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the streets of Askelon—this seventh day, on which it would require a whole army of labourers to give every energy which belongs to them, to the plenteous harvest of so mighty a population, witnesses more than one-half of the people precluded from attending the house of God, and wandering every man after the counsel of his own heart, and in the sight

of his own eyes—on this day, the ear of heaven is assailed with a more audacious cry of rebellion than on any other, and the open door of invitation plies with its welcome, the hundreds and the thousands who have found their habitual way to the haunts of depravity. And is there no room, then, to wish for twenty more churches, and twenty more ministers—for men of zeal and of strength, who might go forth among these wanderers, and compel them to come in—for men of holy fervour, who might set the terrors of hell and the free offers of salvation before them—for men of affection, who might visit the sick, the dying, and the afflicted, and cause the irresistible influence of kindness to circulate at large among their families—for men, who, while they fastened their most intense aim on the great object of preparing sinners for eternity, would scatter along the path of their exertions all the blessings of order, and contentment, and sobriety, and at length make it manifest as day, that the righteousness of the people is the only effectual antidote to a country's ruin—the only path to a country's glory?

My next remark shall be founded on a principle to which I have already alluded—the desirableness of a more frequent intercourse between the higher and the lower orders of society; and what more likely to accomplish this, than a larger ecclesiastical accommodation?—not the scanty provision of the present day, by which the poor are excluded from the church altogether, but such a wide and generous system of accommodation, as that the rich and the poor might sit in company together in the house of

God. It is this Christian fellowship, which, more than any other tie, links so intimately together the high and the low in country parishes. There is, however, another particular to which I would advert, and though I cannot do so without magnifying my office, yet I know not a single circumstance which so upholds the golden line of life amongst our agricultural population, as the manner in which the gap between the pinnacle of the community and its base is filled up by the week-day duties of the clergyman—by that man, of whom it has been well said, that he belongs to no rank, because he associates with all ranks—by that man, whose presence may dignify the palace, but whose peculiar glory it is to carry the influences of friendship and piety into cottages.

This is the age of moral experiment; and much has been devised in our day for promoting the virtue, and the improvement, and the economical habits of the lower orders of society. But in all these attempts to raise a barrier against the growing profligacy of our towns, one important element seems to have passed unheeded, and to have been altogether omitted in the calculation. In all the comparative estimates of the character of a town and the character of a country population, it has been little attended to, that the former are distinguished from the latter by the dreary, hopeless, and almost impassable distance at which they stand from their parish minister. Now, though it be at the hazard of again magnifying my office, I must avow, in the hearing of you all, that there is a moral charm in his personal attentions and his affectionate civilities, and the ever-recurring influ-

ence of his visits and his prayers, which, if restored to the people, would impart a new moral aspect, and eradicate much of the licentiousness and the dishonesty that abound in our cities. On this day of national calamity, if ever the subject should be adverted to from the pulpit, we may be allowed to express our rivetted convictions on the close alliance that obtains between the political interests and the religious character of a country. And I am surely not out of place, when, on looking at the mighty mass of a city population, I state my apprehension, that if something be not done to bring this enormous physical strength under the control of Christian and humanized principle, the day may yet come, when it may lift against the authorities of the land its brawny vigour, and discharge upon them all, the turbulence of its rude and volcanic energy.

Apart altogether from the essential character of the gospel, and keeping out of view the solemn representations of Christianity, by which we are told that each individual of these countless myriads carries an undying principle in his bosom, and that it is the duty of the minister to cherish it, and to watch over it, as one who must render, at the judgment-seat, an account of the charge which has been committed to him—apart from this consideration entirely, which I do not now insist upon, though I blush not to avow its paramount importance over all that can be alleged on the inferior ground of political expediency, yet, on that ground alone, I can gather argument enough for the mighty importance of such men, devoted to the labours of their own separate and peculiar employments—

giving an unbewildered attention to the office of dealing with the hearts and principles of the thousands who are around them—coming forth from the preparations of an unbroken solitude, armed with all the omnipotence of truth among their fellow-citizens—and who, rich in the resources of a mind which meditates upon these things and gives itself wholly to them, are able to suit their admonitions to all the varieties of human character, and to draw their copious and persuasive illustrations from every quarter of human experience. But I speak not merely of their Sabbath ministrations. Give to each a manageable extent of town, within the compass of his personal exertions, and where he might be able to cultivate a ministerial influence among all its families—put it into his power to dignify the very humblest of its tenements by the courteousness of his soothing and benevolent attentions—let it be such a district of population as may not bear him down by the multiplicity of its demands; but where, without any feverish or distracting variety of labour, he may be able to familiarize himself to every house, and to know every individual, and to visit every spiritual patient, and to watch every death-bed, and to pour out the sympathies of a pious and affectionate bosom over every mourning and bereaved family. Bring every city of the land under such a moral regimen as this, and another generation would not pass away, ere righteousness ran down all their streets like a mighty river. That sullen depravity of character, which the gibbet cannot scare away, and which sits so immoveable in the face of the most menacing severi-

ties and in despite of the yearly recurrence of the most terrifying examples—could not keep its ground against the mild, but resistless application of an effective Christian ministry. The very worst of men would be constrained to feel the power of such an application. Sunk as they are in ignorance, and inured as they have been from the first years of their neglected boyhood, to scenes of week-day profligacy and Sabbath profanation—these men, of whom it may be said, that all their moralities are extinct, and all their tendernesses blunted—even they would feel the power of that reviving touch, which the mingled influence of kindness and piety can often impress on the souls of the most abandoned—even they would open the flood-gates of their hearts, and pour forth the tide of an honest welcome on the men who had come in all the cordiality of good-will to themselves and to their families. And thus might a humanizing and an exalting influence be made to circulate through all their dwelling-places: and such a system as this, labouring as it must do at first, under all the discouragements of a heavy and unpromising outset, would gather, during every year of its perseverance, new triumphs and new testimonies to its power. And all that is ruthless and irreclaimable in the character of the present day, would in time be replaced by the softening virtues of a purer and a better generation. This I know to be the dream of many a philanthropist; and a dream as visionary as the very wildest among the fancies of Utopianism it ever will be, under any other expedient than the one I am now pointing to; and nothing, nothing

within the whole compass of nature, or of experience, will ever bring it to its consummation, but the multiplied exertions of the men who carry in their hearts the doctrine, and who bear upon their persons the seal and commission of the New Testament. And, if it be true that towns are the great instruments of political revolution—if it be there that all the elements of disturbance are ever found in busiest fermentation—if we learn, from the history of the past, that they are the favourite and the frequented rallying-places for all the brooding violence of the land—who does not see that the pleading earnestness of the Christian minister is at one with the soundest maxims of political wisdom, when he urges upon the rulers and magistrates of the land, that this is indeed the cheap defence of a nation—this the vitality of all its strength and of all its greatness.

And it is with the most undissembled satisfaction that I advert to the first step of such a process, within the city of our habitation, as I have now been recommending. It may still be the day of small things; but it is such a day as ought not to be despised. The prospect of another church and another labourer in this interesting field, demands the most respectful acknowledgments of the Christian public, to the men who preside over the administration of our affairs; and they, I am sure, will not feel it to be oppressive, if, met by the willing cordialities of a responding population, the demand should ring in their ears for another, and another, till, like the moving of the spirit on the face of the waters, which made beauty and order

to emerge out of the rude materials of creation, the germ of moral renovation shall at length burst into all the efflorescence of moral accomplishment—and the voice of psalms shall again be heard in our families—and impurity and violence shall be banished from our streets—and then the erasure made, in these degenerate days, on the escutcheons of our city, again replaced in characters of gold, shall tell to every stranger, that Glasgow flourisheth through the preaching of the Word.*

And though, under the mournful remembrance of our departed Princess, we cannot but feel on this day of many tears, as if a volley of lightning from heaven had been shot at the pillar of our State, and struck away the loveliest ornament from its pinnacle, and shook the noble fabric to its base; yet still, if we strengthen its foundation in the principle and character of our people, it will stand secure on the deep and steady basis of a country's worth, which can never be overthrown. And thus an enduring memorial of our Princess will be embalmed in the hearts of the people; and good will emerge out of this dark and bitter dispensation, if, when the judgments of God are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world shall learn righteousness.

* The original motto of the city is, "Let Glasgow flourish through the preaching of the Word;" which, by the curtailment alluded to, has been reduced to the words, "Let Glasgow flourish."

APPENDIX.

Dr Adam Smith, in his Treatise on the *Wealth of Nations*, argues against religious establishments, on the ground that the article of religious instruction should be left to the pure operation of demand and supply, like any article of ordinary merchandise. He seems to have overlooked one most material circumstance of distinction. The native and untaught propensities of the human constitution, will always of themselves secure a demand for the commodities of trade, sufficiently effective to bring forward a supply equal to the real needs of the population, and to their power of purchasing. But the appetite for religious instruction is neither so strong nor so universal as to secure such an effective demand for it. Had the people been left in this matter to themselves, there would, in point of fact, have been large tracks of country without a place of worship, and without a minister. The legislature have met the population half-way, by providing them with a church and a religious teacher, in every little district of the land; and by this arrangement have increased, to a very great degree, the quantity of attendance and the quantity of actual ministration. In point of fact, a much greater number of people do come to church, and do come within the application of Christian influence, when the church and the preacher is provided for them, than if they had been left to build a meeting-house, and to maintain a preacher themselves. There is a far surer and more abundant supply of this wholesome influence dealt out among the population under the former arrangement, than under the latter one; and it is this *excess* of moral and religious good, which forms the only argument for a national establishment that I shall now insist upon.

The argument of Dr Smith goes to demonstrate the folly of a national establishment, either of meal-sellers or of butchers, or of any national establishment for supplying the people with the

necessaries and the comforts of life. But the peculiarity already adverted to, renders it totally inapplicable to the question of a national establishment for supplying the people with the lessons of Christianity.

The experiment, indeed, has been tried with variations on a large scale, and with results which are very instructive. In the southern, and, we believe, in the middle States of America, there is no general provision for the clergy. The population are left to find their own way to the supply of their own wants in this particular; and we have been credibly informed, that there are, at this moment, from four to five millions of the people of the United States, who are growing up without any regular administration of the Word, or of its ordinances amongst them. In the northern States, there is a legislative provision;* and the difference in point of moral habit and character, between their population and that of the other States, is all in favour of religious establishments.

But we have long thought, that a still surer and more impressive argument may be drawn from a nearer field of observation. The article of general education has one property in common with the article of religious education. The appetite for it among the people is not so great as the use of it to the people:—its agreeableness is not equal to its advantage. And, therefore, if left to their own native demand, it would not in fact be called for, up to the extent that it would be beneficial. This, then, supplies a fair occasion for the interference of government; and it is wise in them to build, in every section of their territory, a school and a school-house; and to defray part of the expense of the schoolmaster in the shape of salary; and to meet the people half-way, by placing this apparatus within their view; and, by making scholarship both cheap and accessible, to lure their families to the habit of attendance. In Scotland, this has given rise to the parochial establishment of schools; and we have only to look to the respective peasantries of the two sister kingdoms, that we may estimate aright the wisdom and the good of such establishments. In Scotland, a ready-made apparatus for education has been obtruded on the view

* Now done away; and with the undoubted effect of greatly lessening the proportion between the number of church-goers and the number of the whole population. 1838.

of the people for upwards of a whole century; and it is quite an anomaly in any of our lowland and country parishes, when any person rises to manhood without the acquirement of the elements of education. In England, this matter has been left to Dr Smith's operation of demand and supply; and, till very lately, when Societies have been instituted, which will never accomplish the object with the fullness and the certainty that parish schools do, the arts of reading and writing were rare accomplishments among the lower classes of society in that country. This difference between the two people, in point of general education, just hinges on the very principles which are concerned in the question of religious education; and I can never look to the moral and intelligent character of our own people, without gathering from it such a lesson, as endears to me all the religious as well as all the literary establishments of our nation.

But a still more direct and homeward argument, on the same side, may be drawn from the ecclesiastical state of our larger cities. It is quite notorious that the population of these cities has greatly outstripped the provision of churches that has been made for them by the establishment; or, in other words, the establishment takes up a very small proportion of the ground, and leaves a mighty remainder to that very operation to which Dr Smith seems inclined to leave the whole extent of the country. It were, therefore, an interesting point to ascertain, in how far this remainder is taken up by dissenters, or by those who exemplify the effect of that great principle of demand and supply, which is supposed by some to supersede the necessity of a religious establishment. I beg leave to recommend the prosecution of this important survey, to those who perceive its bearings on a great practical question most intimately connected with the interior policy of the state, and with the best interests of the population.

It was partly with this object in view, that the writer of this lately made a survey of his own parish, consisting of a certain district in the city of Glasgow. Those who reside in the place will recognize it, when he tells them that it comprises all that portion of the city which lies to the east of the Saltmarket, and to the south of the Gallowgate, within the limits of the royalty, and containing a population of eleven thousand one hundred and twenty souls. He now regrets exceedingly that he did not push

his inquiries to that degree of particularity which would have enabled him to state with precision the number of individual sitters, both in the establishment and among dissenters. He merely ascertained the number of three descriptions of families—those who had seats in the establishment—those who had seats among the dissenters—and those who had seats no where. He found that in the great majority of families, there were sitters somewhere; but soon perceived, that if, from the commencement of his survey, he had made it an object to ascertain the number of sitters in each family, he would have made out a fearful deficiency indeed of congregational attendance and congregational habits among the people. He at times accidentally got the information of one individual seat being all that was taken by a family of ten members; and, while he submits himself to the correction of more accurate surveys, he ventures the assertion, for the present, that, out of the above population, there are not three thousand five hundred sitters of every description—of whom the sitters in dissenting-houses form at least two-thirds of the whole *

Now, in this district of town, there ought to be a church-going population of nearly seven thousand. The establishment does not furnish accommodation for one-sixth of this number, leaving a mighty remainder, over which Dr Smith's favourite principle is free to expatiate. And it certainly has expatiated, and with an effect, too, which claims the gratitude and the acknowledgments of the Christian public. The dissenters have, at the very least, accomplished double the quantity of good in this part of the town, which the establishment has done. But with all their zeal, and all the worth and literature of their clergy, and the many accomplishments which they possess, and no where more than in Glasgow, for attracting a population, and for obtaining a wide and extensive influence among them, do we behold the one-half of the whole ground unreached and unreclaimed by them, and altogether left without the benefit of the fittest and most powerful instrument of moral cultivation among the people.

I recur, therefore, to the difference in point of attendance and

* It will be recollected that, according to legislative enactment, in country parishes, accommodation ought to be provided for as many sitters as make up one-half of the population; and in town parishes, for as many as make up between one-half and two-thirds of the population.

in point of actual ministration between that state of things where the population are left to themselves, and that state of things where they are met by a regular and a ready-made provision, as the great practical argument for the necessity and the good of religious establishments. I assert that, if, with the growing population, there had been a growing ecclesiastical provision for their moral and religious wants; and that, if ministers had been permitted to cultivate a close and spiritual connection with their parishes, by that connection not being rendered impracticable; and that, if the mischievous system had not been adopted, of widening the breach still more between them and the people of their local and geographical vineyard, by exposing those seats, for which the parish ought, in all justice and in all expediency, to have the preference, to the general competition of the whole city; and that, if the clergy had been permitted to give their concentrated energies, each to a manageable district, where he stood endeared to the great mass of the families by his week-day attentions, and where the influence of these attentions was strengthened every week by the recurrence of his Sabbath ministrations; and that, if the government of our country had not fallen into the monstrous impolicy of withdrawing the mind and the talent of the clergy from their own peculiar objects, by the overwhelming accumulation of civil and of secular duties, which they have laid upon them; and that, if in this respect they had not been imitated by all the municipalities of the land, who, if not resisted to the uttermost, would do what in them lay to accelerate that precious transformation, by which the ministers of religion must at length, in our larger towns, sink down into officers of police, or drivelling subsidiaries to the mere arrangements of state and city regulation —Had some of these plain things been done, and some of them not been done, then I assert, that, at this moment, there would have been in full circulation throughout that peopled mass, which looks to the distant eye so awfully impenetrable, the kindly and pacific flow of such a sweetening, but powerful influence, as would have made the complexion of our larger cities to be as different from what it is now, as the softness of home and of friendship is different from the rude aspect of hostility, or as the music of church-bells differs from the wild and terrific notes of insurrectionary violence.

It may perhaps be thought an anomaly of sentiment, that one so impressed with the need and the advantage of an extended religious establishment, should be equally decided as to the advantage of a most zealous, active, and unrestrained dissenterism. If the former were armed with such a power of intolerance as would enable it to crush the latter, instead of a blessing it would prove a curse to the country which sustained it. It would soon be overrun with indolence and corruption, and the various evils which are ever sure to result from the exercise of a secure and independent patronage. We are not stating it as our opinion, that this patronage should be vested otherwise than it is at present, We are not sure if any good would result from its transference to any other quarter than the one in which it has taken up its actual residence. We can never so forget the way in which many of the orthodox congregations of England have lapsed into Unitarianism, nor be so blind to the degree in which the infection of Arianism has spread itself over the North of Ireland, as to admit it as an infallible position, that popular patronage is the best way of raising a barrier against error of doctrine among the ministers of religion. We have long thought that the moral renovation of our people is not to be effected by pulling down the frame-work either of our Scotch or our English Establishments, and substituting others in their place. It is to be done by animating each of them with the breath of a fresher and more vigorous existence. And for the accomplishment of this object, we shall ever look upon dissenters as great moral benefactors of their country. They have taken up part of that ground which has been left untouched by the national clergy; though, for the reasons already given, we do not think that they will ever overtake the whole of it. They call forth a most salutary reaction in the church. They exert a most salutary control over the dispensers of patronage. They do make such progress at times as to perplex and alarm the bigots of an establishment. But such we believe to be the native preference of our people for our establishments, that we feel quite confident and secure, that dissenters never will make more progress than they deserve to make; and that they never will obtain such an ascendancy over the mind of the country, as to lead to the subversion of its religious establishments, till these establishments deserve to be subverted. And in such an enlightened country as

ours, the vigilant eye of the friends of the church and of its patrons, is open to all this; and the sense of the public is beginning to be more alive to an efficient clergy; and the mighty hold which dissenters have over the population, alarming to many, but never in the slightest degree alarming to us, has lent an additional impulse to these considerations; and thus it is that they are conferring a most important blessing upon our establishment, by raising within its bosom the salutary counteraction of zeal, and diligence, and piety. Such are the only legitimate weapons of our warfare. And in these circumstances, and with a single view to the moral and religious character of our people, we hail dissenters as our best and most valuable auxiliaries. We look upon them as indispensable friends, whose services we cannot spare. We disclaim all sympathy with those who are ashamed, or with those who are afraid of them. We should like to see every badge and remnant of inferiority taken from off their persons; and are most thoroughly convinced, that their full and equal admission into all the offices of the state, is an essential step in the progress of an enlightened policy.

No one who reads, and no one who heard the preceding sermon with attention, will conceive that by the introduction of twenty more churches and twenty more ministers, I meant to come forward with any formal or didactic specification of the additional number that would be required in Glasgow. We are quite aware, that in the eyes of men who are not accustomed to the exercise of generalization, there is nothing which imparts a more visionary character to any proposal of improvement, than to lay in perspective before them the whole of its effect on the ultimate condition and character of our country. It is in fact placing before them a state of society so different from that which is immediately around us, that they feel as if they were transported into fairy-land; and this confirms them in their obstinate suspicion, that all about it is theoretical; and from the moment that this impression has found a lodgment within them, they become deaf as adders to every one representation of the plain and practicable steps by which the matter gradually arrives at its accomplishment. The building of one new church at present in Glasgow, is one step. The release of the existing clergy from the secularities laid on them by government, would be another step. The ready imita-

tion of this salutary release, on the part of our municipalities, would be a third step. The very simple enactment, that the preference for church-seats as they fell vacant, should be granted to the inhabitants of the corresponding parish, would be no unimportant step. A growing demand for accommodation on the part of the people, and a liberal arrangement with those wealthy individuals who would willingly undertake the expense and the hazard of the erection of as many churches as should be called for, would be another mighty and decisive step in this great progression. And in a few years, a conviction of the good that was done by the real and practical exhibition of it, would ensure the continuance of the noble reformation. We neither expect, nor do we contend for any thing magical and instantaneous. This great national improvement may be as slow in its progress as the great national corruption was, which it is intended to remedy. It were desirable if it could be effected in a single day. But we shall rejoice if it be effected during the lapse of a single generation. And however necessary it may be, in arguing the matter, to outrun the present habits of thinking which obtain on this subject, there is no danger whatever that in the execution of a matter so weighty and so operose, there will be any such rapidity as shall at all disturb the repose of the most quiescent and sober-minded citizens.

THOUGHTS ON UNIVERSAL PEACE:

A

SERMON

PREACHED IN

THE TRON CHURCH, GLASGOW,

ON

A DAY OF NATIONAL THANKSGIVING

IN 1816.

SERMON II.

THOUGHTS ON UNIVERSAL PEACE.

"Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more."—ISAIAH ii. 4.

THERE are a great many passages in Scripture, which warrant the expectation that a time is coming, when war shall be put an end to—when its abominations and its cruelties shall be banished from the face of the earth—when those restless elements of ambition and jealousy, which have so long kept the species in a state of unceasing commotion, and are ever and anon sending another and another wave over the field of this world's politics, shall at length be hushed into a placid and enduring calm; and many and delightful are the images which the Bible employs, as guided by the light of prophecy; it carries us forward to those millennial days, when the reign of peace shall be established, and the wide charity of the gospel, which is confined by no limits, and owns no distinctions, shall embosom the whole human race within the ample grasp of one harmonious and universal family.

But before I proceed, let me attempt to do away a delusion which exists on the subject of prophecy. Its fulfilments are all certain, say many, and we have therefore nothing to do, but to wait for them, in passive and indolent expectation. The truth

of God stands in no dependence on human aid to vindicate the immutability of all His announcements; and the power of God stands in no need of the feeble exertions of man to hasten the accomplishment of any of His purposes. Let us therefore sit down quietly in the attitude of spectators—let us leave the Divinity to do His own work in His own way, and mark, by the progress of a history over which we have no control, the evolution of His designs, and the march of His wise and beneficent administration.

Now, it is very true, that the Divinity will do His own work in His own way, but if He choose to tell us that that way is not without the instrumentality of men, but by their instrumentality, might not this sitting down into the mere attitude of spectators, turn out to be a most perverse and disobedient conclusion? It is true, that His purpose will obtain its fulfilment, whether we shall offer or not to help it forward by our co-operation. But if the object is to be brought about, and if, in virtue of the same sovereignty by which He determined upon the object, He has also determined on the way which leads to it, and that that way shall be by the acting of human principle, and the putting forth of human exertion, then let us keep back our co-operation as we may, God will raise up the hearts of others to that which we abstain from; and they, admitted into the high honour of being fellow-workers with God, may do homage to the truth of His prophecy; while we, perhaps, may unconsciously do dreadful homage to the truth of another warning, and another prophecy. "I work a work in your days which

you shall not believe, though a man declare it unto you. Behold, ye despisers, and wonder and perish."

Now this is the very way in which prophecies have been actually fulfilled. The return of the people of Israel to their own land was an event predicted by inspiration, and was brought about by the stirring up of the spirit of Cyrus, who felt himself charged with the duty of building a house to God at Jerusalem. The pouring out of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost was foretold by the Saviour ere he left the world, and was accomplished upon men, who assembled themselves together at the place to which they were commanded to repair; and there they waited, and they prayed. The rapid propagation of Christianity in those days was known by the human agents of this propagation, to be made sure by the word of prophecy; but the way in which it was actually made sure, was by the strenuous exertions, the unexampled heroism, the holy devotedness and zeal of martyrs, and apostles, and evangelists. And even now, my brethren, while no professing Christians can deny that their faith is to be one day the faith of all countries; but while many of them idly sit, and wait the time of God putting forth some mysterious and unheard of agency, to bring about the universal diffusion, there are men who have betaken themselves to the obvious expedient of going abroad among the nations, and teaching them; and though derided by an undiscerning world, they seem to be the very men pointed out by the Bible, who are going to and fro increasing the knowledge of its doctrines, and who will be the honoured instruments of carry-

ing into effect the most splendid of all its anticipations.

Now the same holds true, I apprehend, of the prophecy in my text. The abolition of war will be the effect not of any sudden or resistless visitation from heaven on the character of men—not of any mystical influence working with all the omnipotence of a charm on the passive hearts of those who are the subjects of it—not of any blind or overruling fatality which will come upon the earth at some distant period of its history, and about which, we, of the present day, have nothing to do but to look silently on, without concern, and without co-operation. The prophecy of a peace as universal as the spread of the human race, and as enduring as the moon in the firmament, will meet its accomplishment, and at that very time which is already fixed by Him, who seeth the end of all things from the beginning thereof. But it will be brought about by the activity of men. It will be done by the philanthropy of thinking and intelligent Christians. The conversion of the Jews —the spread of gospel light among the regions of idolatry—these are distinct subjects of prophecy, on which the faithful of the land are now acting, and to the fulfilment of which they are giving their zeal and their energy. I conceive the prophecy which relates to the final abolition of war will be taken up in the same manner; and the subject will be brought to the test of Christian principle; and many will unite to spread a growing sense of its follies and its enormities, over the countries of the world—and the public will be enlightened not by the factious

and turbulent declamations of a party, but by the mild dissemination of gospel sentiment through the land—and the prophecy contained in this book will pass into effect and accomplishment, by no other influence than the influence of its ordinary lessons on the hearts and consciences of individuals—and the measure will first be carried in one country, not by the unhallowed violence of discontent, but by the control of general opinion, expressed on the part of a people, who, if Christian, in their repugnance to war, will be equally Christian in all the loyalties and subjections, and meek unresisting virtues of the New Testament—and the sacred fire of good-will to the children of men will spread itself through all climes, and through all latitudes —and thus by scriptural truth conveyed with power from one people to another, and taking its ample round among all the tribes and families of the earth, shall we arrive at the magnificent result of peace throughout all its provinces, and security in all its dwelling-places.

In the further prosecution of this discourse, I shall, First, expatiate a little on the evils of war.

In the Second place, I shall direct your attention to the obstacles which stand in the way of its extinction, and which threaten to retard for a time the accomplishment of the prophecy I have now selected for your consideration.

And, in the Third place, I shall endeavour to point out, what can only be done at present in a

hurried and superficial manner, some of the expedients by which these obstacles may be done away.

I. I shall expatiate a little on the evils of war. The mere existence of the prophecy in my text, is a sentence of condemnation upon war, and stamps a criminality on its very forehead. So soon as Christianity shall gain a full ascendancy in the world, from that moment war is to disappear. We have heard that there is something noble in the art of war; that there is something generous in the ardour of that fine chivalric spirit which kindles in the hour of alarm, and rushes with delight among the thickest scenes of danger and of enterprise;—that man is never more proudly arrayed, than when, elevated by a contempt for death, he puts on his intrepid front, and looks serene, while the arrows of destruction are flying on every side of him;—that expunge war, and you expunge some of the brightest names in the catalogue of human virtue, and demolish that theatre on which have been displayed some of the sublimest energies of the human character. It is thus that war has been invested with a most pernicious splendour, and men have offered to justify it as a blessing, and an ornament to society, and attempts have been made to throw a kind of imposing morality around it; and one might almost be reconciled to the whole train of its calamities and its horrors, did he not believe his Bible, and learn from its information, that in the days of perfect righteousness, there will be no war;—that so soon as the character of man has had the last finish of Christian principle thrown over it,

from that moment all the instruments of war will be thrown aside, and all its lessons will be forgotten ;—that, therefore, what are called the virtues of war are no virtues at all, or that a better and a worthier scene will be provided for their exercise ;—but in short, that at the commencement of that blissful era, when the reign of heaven shall be established, war will take its departure from the world with all the other plagues and atrocities of the species.

But apart altogether from this testimony to the evil of war, let us just take a direct look of it, and see whether we can find its character engraven on the aspect it bears to the eye of an attentive observer. The stoutest heart of this assembly would recoil, were he who owns it, to behold the destruction of a single individual by some deed of violence. Were the man who at this moment stands before you in the full play and energy of health, to be in another moment laid by some deadly aim a lifeless corpse at your feet, there is not one of you who would not prove how strong are the relentings of nature at a spectacle so hideous as death. There are some of you who would be haunted for whole days by the image of horror you had witnessed—who would feel the weight of a most oppressive sensation upon you heart, which nothing but time could wear away—who would be so pursued by it as to be unfit for business or for enjoyment—who would think of it through the day, and it would spread a gloomy disquietude over your waking moments—who would dream of it at night, and it would turn that bed which you courted as a retreat

from the torments of an ever-meddling memory, into a scene of restlessness.

But generally the death of violence is not instantaneous, and there is often a sad and dreary interval between its final consummation, and the infliction of the blow which causes it. The winged messenger of destruction has not found its direct avenue to that spot, where the principle of life is situated—and the soul, finding obstacles to its immediate egress, has to struggle for hours, ere it can make its weary way through the winding avenues of that tenement, which has been torn open by a brother's hand. O! my brethren, if there be something appalling in the suddenness of death, think not that when gradual in its advances, you will alleviate the horrors of this sickening contemplation, by viewing it in a milder form. O! tell me, if there be any relentings of pity in your bosom, how could you endure it, to behold the agonies of the dying man—as goaded by pain, he grasps the cold ground in convulsive energy, or faint with the loss of blood, his pulse ebbs low, and the gathering paleness spreads itself over his countenance—or wrapping himself round in despair, he can only mark by a few feeble quiverings, that life still lurks and lingers in his lacerated body—or lifting up a faded eye, he casts on you a look of imploring helplessness, for that succour which no sympathy can yield him. It may be painful to dwell on such a representation—but this is the way in which the cause of humanity is served. The eye of the sentimentalist turns away from its sufferings; and he passes by on the other side, lest he hear that

pleading voice, which is armed with a tone of remonstrance so vigorous as to disturb him. He cannot bear thus to pause, in imagination, on the distressing picture of one individual; but multiply it ten thousand times—say, how much of all this distress has been heaped together upon a single field—give us the arithmetic of this accumulated wretchedness, and lay it before us with all the accuracy of an official computation—and, strange to tell, not one sigh is lifted up among the crowd of eager listeners, as they stand on tiptoe, and catch every syllable of utterance, which is read to them out of the registers of death. O! say, what mystic spell is that, which so blinds us to the sufferings of our brethren—which deafens to our ear the voice of bleeding humanity, when it is aggravated by the shriek of dying thousands—which makes the very magnitude of the slaughter, throw a softening disguise over its cruelties, and its horrors—which causes us to eye with indifference, the field that is crowded with the most revolting abominations, and arrests that sigh, which each individual would singly have drawn from us, by the report of the many who have fallen, and breathed their last in agony along with him?

I am not saying that the burden of all this criminality rests upon the head of the immediate combatants. It lies somewhere; but who can deny that a soldier may be a Christian, and that from the bloody field on which his body is laid, his soul may wing its ascending way to the shores of a peaceful eternity? But when I think that the Christians, even of the great world, form but a

very little flock, and that an army is not a propitious soil for the growth of Christian principle—when I think on the character of one such army, that had been led on for years by a ruffian ambition—and been enured to scenes of barbarity—and had gathered a most ferocious hardihood of soul, from the many enterprises of violence to which an unprincipled commander had carried them—when I follow them to the field of battle, and further think, that on both sides of an exasperated contest—the gentleness of Christianity can have no place in almost any bosom; but that nearly every heart is lighted up with fury, and breathes a vindictive purpose against a brother of the species, I cannot but reckon it among the most fearful of the calamities of war—that while the work of death is thickening along its ranks, so many disembodied spirits should pass into the presence of Him who sitteth upon the throne, in such a posture, and with such a preparation.

I have no time, and assuredly as little taste, for expatiating on a topic so melancholy, nor can I afford at present to set before you a vivid picture of the other miseries which war carries in its train—how it desolates every country through which it rolls, and spreads violation and alarm among its villages—how, at its approach, every home pours forth its trembling fugitives—how all the rights of property, and all the provisions of justice, must give way before its devouring exactions—how, when Sabbath comes, no Sabbath charm comes along with it—and for the sound of the church bell, which wont to spread its music over some fine landscape

of nature, and summon rustic worshippers to the house of prayer—nothing is heard but the deathful vollies of the battle, and the maddening outcry of infuriated men—how, as the fruit of victory, an unprincipled licentiousness which no discipline can restrain, is suffered to walk at large among the people—and all that is pure, and reverend, and holy in the virtue of families, is cruelly trampled on, and held in the bitterest derision. Oh! my brethren, were we to pursue those details, which no pen ever attempts, and no chronicle perpetuates, we should be tempted to ask, what that is which civilization has done for the character of the species? It has thrown a few paltry embellishments over the surface of human affairs; and for the order of society, it has reared the defences of law around the rights and the property of the individuals who compose it. But let war, legalized as you may, and ushered into the field with all the parade of forms and manifestoes—let this war only have its season, and be suffered to overleap these artificial defences, and you will soon see how much of the security of the commonwealth is due to positive restrictions, and how little of it is due to a natural sense of justice among men. I know well, that the plausibilities of human character, which abound in every modern and enlightened society, have been mustered up to oppose the doctrine of the Bible, on the woful depravity of our race. But out of the history of war, I can gather for this doctrine the evidence of experiment. It tells me, that man, when left to himself and let loose among his fellows, to walk after the counsel of his own heart, and in

the sight of his own eyes, will soon discover how thin that tinsel is, which the boasted hand of civilization has thrown over him.—And we have only to blow the trumpet of war, and proclaim to man the hour of his opportunity, that his character may show itself in its essential elements—and that we may see how many, in this our moral and enlightened day, would spring forward as to a jubilee of delight, and prowl like the wild men of the woods, amidst scenes of rapacity, and cruelty, and violence.

II. But let me hasten away from this part of the subject; and, in the Second place, direct your attention to those obstacles which stand in the way of the extinction of war, and which threaten to retard, for a time, the accomplishment of the prophecy I have now selected for your consideration.

But is this the time, it may be asked, to complain of obstacles to the extinction of war, when peace has been given to the nations, and we are assembled to celebrate its triumphs? Is this day of high and solemn gratulation, to be turned to such forebodings as these? The whole of Europe is now at rest from the tempest which convulsed it—and a solemn treaty, with all its adjustments and all its guarantees, promises a firm perpetuity to the repose of the world. We have long fought for a happier order of things, and at length we have established it—and the hard-earned bequest we hand down to posterity as a rich inheritance, won by the labours and the sufferings of the present generation. That gigantic ambition which stalked in triumph over the firmest and the oldest of our

monarchies, is now laid—and can never again burst forth from the confinement of its prison-hold to waken a new uproar, and send forth new troubles over the face of a desolated world.

Now, in reply to this, let it be observed, that every interval of repose is precious—every breathing time from the work of violence is to be rejoiced in by the friends of humanity—every agreement among the powers of the earth, by which a temporary respite can be gotten from the calamities of war, is so much reclaimed from the amount of those miseries that afflict the world, and of those crimes, the cry of which ascendeth unto heaven, and bringeth down the judgments of God on this dark and rebellious province of His creation. I trust, that on this day, gratitude to Him who alone can still the tumults of the people, will be the sentiment of every heart—and I trust that none who now hear me, will refuse to evince his gratitude to the Author of the New Testament, by their obedience to one of the most distinct and undoubted of its lessons—I mean the lesson of a reverential and submissive loyalty. I cannot pass an impartial eye over this record of God's will, without perceiving the utter repugnance that there is between the spirit of Christianity, and the factious, turbulent, unquenchable, and ever-meddling spirit of political disaffection. I will not compromise, by the surrender of a single jot or tittle, the integrity of that preceptive code which the Saviour hath left behind him for the obedience of His disciples. I will not detach the very minutest of its features, from the fine picture of morality that Christ hath bequeathed, both by

commandment and example, to adorn the nature He condescended to wear—and sure I am that the man who has drunk in the entire spirit of the gospel —who, reposing himself on the faith of its promised immortality, can maintain an elevated calm amid all the fluctuations of this world's interest—whose exclusive ambition it is to be the unexcepted pupil of pure, and spiritual, and self-denying Christianity —sure I am that such a man will honour the king and all who are in authority—and be subject unto them for the sake of conscience—and render unto them all their dues—and not withhold a single fraction of the tribute they impose upon him—and be the best of subjects, just because he is the best of Christians—resisting none of the ordinances of God, and living a quiet and a peaceable life, in all godliness and honesty.

But it gives me pleasure to advance a further testimony in behalf of that government with which it has pleased God, who appointeth to all men the bounds of their habitation, to bless that portion of the globe which we occupy. I count it such a government that I not only owe it the loyalty of my principles—but I also owe it the loyalty of my affections. I could not lightly part with my devotion to that government which the other year opened the door to the Christianization of India—I shall never withhold the tribute of my reverence from that government which put an end to the atrocities of the Slave Trade—I shall never forget the triumph which, in that proudest day of Britain's story, the cause of humanity gained within the walls of our enlightened Parliament. Let my right hand forget

her cunning, ere I forget that country of my birth, where, in defiance to all the clamours of mercantile alarm, every calculation of interest was given to the wind, and braving every hazard, she nobly resolved to shake off the whole burden of the infamy which lay upon her. I shall never forget, that how to complete the object in behalf of which she has so honourably led the way, she has walked the whole round of civilized society, and knocked at the door of every government in Europe, and lifted her imploring voice for injured Africa, and pled with the mightiest monarchs of the world, the cause of her outraged shores, and her distracted families. I can neither shut my heart nor my eyes to the fact, that at this moment she is stretching forth the protection of her naval arm, and shielding to the uttermost of her vigour, that coast where an inhuman avarice, is still plying its guilty devices, and aiming to perpetuate among an unoffending people, a trade of cruelty, with all the horrid train of its terrors and abominations. Were such a government as this to be swept from its base, either by the violence of foreign hostility, or by the hands of her own misled and infatuated children,—I should never cease to deplore it as the deadliest interruption which ever had been given to the interests of human virtue, and to the march of human improvement. O! how it should swell every heart, not with pride, but with gratitude, to think that the land of our fathers, with all the iniquities which abound in it, with all the profligacy which spreads along our streets, and all the profaneness that is heard among our companies—to think that this our land,

overspread as it is with the appalling characters of guilt, is still the securest asylum of worth and of liberty—that this is the land from which the most copious emanations of Christianity are going forth to all the quarters of the world—that this is the land which teems from one end to the other of it with the most splendid designs and enterprises for the good of the species—that this is the land where public principle is most felt, and public objects are most prosecuted, and the fine impulse of a public spirit is most ready to carry its generous people beyond the limits of a selfish and contracted patriotism. Yes, and when the heart of the philanthropist is sinking within him at the gloomy spectacle of those crimes and atrocities which still deform the history of man, I know not a single earthly expedient more fitted to brighten and sustain him, than to turn his eye to the country in which he lives—and there see the most enlightened government in the world acting as the organ of its most moral and intelligent population.

It is not against the government of my country, therefore, that I direct my observations—but against that nature of man in the infirmities of which we all share, and the evil of which no government can extinguish. We have carried a new political arrangement, and we experience as the result of it, a temporary calm—but we have not yet carried our way to the citadel of human passions. The elements of war are hushed for a season—but these elements are not destroyed. They still rankle in many an unsubdued heart—and I am too well taught by the history of the past, and the experience of its restless

variations, not to believe that they will burst forth again in thunder over the face of society. No, my brethren, it will only be when diffused and vital Christianity comes upon the earth, that an enduring peace will come along with it. The prophecy of my text will obtain its fulfilment—but not till the fulfilment of the verses which go before it;—not till the influence of the gospel has found its way to the human bosom, and plucked out of it the elementary principles of war;—not till the law of love shall spread its melting and all-subduing efficacy, among the children of one common nature;—not till ambition be dethroned from its mastery over the affections of the inner man;—not till the guilty splendours of war shall cease to captivate its admirers, and spread the blaze of a deceitful heroism, over the wholesale butchery of the species;—not till national pride be humbled, and man shall learn, that if it be individually the duty of each of us in honour to prefer one another; then let these individuals combine as they may, and form societies as numerous and extensive as they may, and each of these be swelled out to the dimensions of an empire, still, that mutual condescension and forbearance remain the unalterable Christian duties of these empires to each other;—not till man learn to revere his brother as man, whatever portion of the globe he occupies, and all the jealousies and preferences of a contracted patriotism be given to the wind;—not till war shall cease to be prosecuted as a trade, and the charm of all that interest which is linked with its continuance, shall cease to beguile men in the peaceful walks of merchandise, into a barbarous longing after war;—not,

in one word, till pride, and jealousy, and interest, and all that is opposite to the law of God and the charity of the gospel, shall be for ever eradicated from the character of those who possess an effectual control over the public and political movements of the species;—Not till all this be brought about; and there is not another agent in the whole compass of nature that can bring it about but the gospel of Christ, carried home by the all-subduing power of the Spirit to the consciences of men;—then, and not till then, my brethren, will peace come to take up its perennial abode with us, and its blessed advent on earth be hailed by one shout of joyful acclamation throughout all its families;—then, and not till then, will the sacred principle of good-will to men circulate as free as the air of heaven among all countries—and the sun looking out from the firmament, will behold one fine aspect of harmony throughout the wide extent of a regenerated world.

It will only be in the last days, "when it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills, and all nations shall flow into it: And many people shall go, and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem; and he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people;"—then, and not till then, "they shall beat their swords into plough-shares, and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation shall

not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more."

The above rapid sketch glances at the chief obstacles to the extinction of war; and, in what remains of this discourse, I shall dwell a little more particularly on as many of them as my time will allow me, finding it impossible to exhaust so wide a topic, within the limits of the public services of one day.

The first great obstacle then to the extinction of war, is the way in which the heart of man is carried off from its barbarities and its horrors, by the splendour of its deceitful accompaniments. There is a feeling of the sublime in contemplating the shock of armies, just as there is in contemplating the devouring energy of a tempest; and this so elevates and engrosses the whole man, that his eye is blind to the tears of bereaved parents, and his ear is deaf to the piteous moan of the dying, and the shriek of their desolated families. There is a gracefulness in the picture of a youthful warrior burning for distinction on the field, and lured by this generous aspiration to the deepest of the animated throng, where, in the fell work of death, the opposing sons of valour struggle for a remembrance and a name;—and this side of the picture is so much the exclusive object of our regard, as to disguise from our view the mangled carcasses of the fallen, and the writhing agonies of the hundreds and the hundreds more who have been laid on the cold ground, where they are left to languish and to die. There no eye pities them. No sister is there to weep over them. There no gentle hand

is present to ease the dying posture, or bind up the wounds, which, in the maddening fury of the combat, have been given and received by the children of one common Father. There death spreads its pale ensigns over every countenance; and when night comes on, and darkens around them, how many a despairing wretch must take up with the bloody field as the untended bed of his last sufferings, without one friend to bear the message of tenderness to his distant home, without one companion to close his eyes.

I avow it. On every side of me I see causes at work which go to spread a most delusive colouring over war, and to remove its shocking barbarities to the back-ground of our contemplations altogether. I see it in the history which tells me of the superb appearance of the troops, and the brilliancy of their successive charges. I see it in the poetry which lends the magic of its numbers to the narrative of blood, and transports its many admirers, as by its images, and its figures, and its nodding plumes of chivalry, it throws its treacherous embellishments over a scene of legalized slaughter. I see it in the music which represents the progress of the battle;—and where, after being inspired by the trumpet-notes of preparation, the whole beauty and tenderness of a drawing-room are seen to bend over the sentimental entertainment; nor do I hear the utterance of a single sigh to interrupt the death-tones of the thickening contest, and the moans of the wounded men as they fade away upon the ear, and sink into lifeless silence. All, all goes to prove what strange and

half-sighted creatures we are. Were it not so, war could never have been seen in any other aspect than that of unmingled hatefulness; and I can look to nothing but to the progress of Christian sentiment upon earth, to arrest the strong current of its popular and prevailing partiality for war. Then only will an imperious sense of duty lay the check of severe principle, on all the subordinate tastes and faculties of our nature. Then will glory be reduced to its right estimate—and the wakeful benevolence of the gospel chasing away every spell, will be turned by the treachery of no delusion whatever, from its simple, but sublime enterprises for the good of the species. Then the reign of truth and quietness will be ushered into the world, and war, cruel, atrocious, unrelenting war, will be stript of its many and its bewildering fascinations.

But again, another obstacle to the extinction of war, is a sentiment which seems to be universally gone into, that the rules and promises of the gospel which apply to a single individual, do not apply to a nation of individuals. Just think of the mighty effect it would have on the politics of the world, were this sentiment to be practically deposed from its wonted authority over the counsels and the doings of nations, in their transactions with each other. If forbearance be the virtue of an individual, forbearance is also the virtue of a nation. If it be incumbent on men in honour to prefer each other, it is incumbent on the very largest societies of men, through the constituted organ of their government, to do the same. If it be the glory of a man to defer his anger, and to pass over a transgression,

that nation mistakes its glory which is so feelingly alive to the slightest insult, and musters up its threats and its armaments upon the faintest shadow of a provocation. If it be the magnanimity of an injured man to abstain from vengeance, and if by so doing, he heap coals of fire upon the head of his enemy, then that is the magnanimous nation, which, recoiling from violence and from blood, will do no more than send its Christian embassy, and prefer its mild and impressive remonstrance; and that is the disgraced nation which will refuse the impressiveness of the moral appeal that has been made to it.—O! my brethren, there must be the breathing of a different spirit to circulate round the globe, ere its Christianized nations resign the jealousies which now front them to each other in the scowling attitude of defiance—and much is to do with the people of every land, ere the prophesied influence of the gospel shall bring its virtuous and its pacifying control to bear with effect on the counsels and governments of the world.

I find that I must be drawing to a close, and that I must forbear entering into several topics on which I meant at one time to expatiate. I wished, in particular, to have laid it fully before you, how the extinction of war, though it should withdraw one of those scenes on which man earns the glory of intrepidity—yet it would leave other, and better, and nobler scenes, for the display and the exercise of this respectable attribute. I wished also to explain to you, that however much I admired the general spirit of Quakerism, on the subject of war; yet that I was not prepared to go all the length of

its principles, when that war was strictly defensive. It strikes me, that war is to be abolished by the abolition of its aggressive spirit among the different nations of the world. The text seems to tell me, that this is the order of prophecy upon the subject; —and that it is when nation shall cease to lift up its sword against nation—or, in other words, when one nation shall cease to move, for the purpose of attacking another, that military science will be no longer in demand, and that the people of the earth will learn the art of war no more. I should also have stated, that on this ground, I refrained from pronouncing on the justice or necessity of any one war in which this country has ever been involved. I have no doubt, that many of those who supported our former wars, looked on several of them as wars for existence—but on this matter I carefully abstain from the utterance of a single sentiment—for in so doing, I should feel myself to be descending from the generalities of Christian principle, and employing that pulpit as the vehicle of a questionable policy, which ought never to be prostituted either to the unworthy object of sending forth the incense of human flattery to any one administration, or of regaling the factious, and turbulent, and disloyal passions of any party. I should next, if I had had time, offer such observations as were suggested by my own views of political science, on the multitude of vulnerable points by which this country is surrounded, in the shape of numerous and distant dependencies, and which, however much they may tend to foster the warlike politics of our government, are, in truth, so little worth the expense of a war,

that should all of them be wrested away from us, they would leave the people of our empire as great and as wealthy, and as competent to every purpose of home security as ever. Lastly, I might have whispered my inclination, for a little more of the Chinese policy being imported into Europe, not for the purpose of restraining a liberal intercourse between its different countries, but for the purpose of quieting in each its restless spirit of alarm, about every foreign movement in the politics and designs of other nations; because, sure I am, that were each great empire of the world to lay it down as the maxim of its most scrupulous observance, not to meddle till it was meddled with, each would feel in such a maxim both its safety and its triumph;—for such are the mighty resources of defensive war, that though the whole transportable force of Europe were to land upon our borders, the result of the experiment would be such, that it should never be repeated—the rallying population of Britian could sweep them all from the face of its territory, and a whole myriad of invaders would melt away under the power of such a government as ours, trenched behind the loyalty of her defenders, and strong, as she deserves to be, in the love and in the confidence of all her children.

I would not have touched on any of the lessons of political economy, did they not lead me, by a single step, to a Christian lesson, which I count it my incumbent duty to press upon the attention of you all. Any sudden change in the state of the demand, must throw the commercial world into a temporary derangement.—And whether the change

be from war to peace, or from peace to war, this effect is sure to accompany it. Now for upwards of twenty years, the direction of our trade has been accommodated to a war system; and when this system is put an end to, I do not say what amount of the distress will light upon this neighbourhood, but we may be sure that all the alarm of falling markets, and ruined speculation, will spread an oppressive gloom over many of the manufacturing districts of the land. Now, let my title to address you on other grounds be as questionable as it may, I feel no hesitation whatever in announcing it, as your most imperative duty, that no outcry of impatience or discontent from you, shall embarrass the pacific policy of his Majesty's government. They have conferred a great blessing on the country, in conferring on it peace; and it is your part resignedly to weather the languid or disastrous months which may come along with it. The interest of trade is an old argument that has been set up, in resistance to the dearest and most substantial interests of humanity. When Paul wanted to bring Christianity into Ephesus, he raised a storm of opposition around him, from a quarter which, I dare say, he was not counting on. There happened to be some shrine manufactories in that place, and as the success of the Apostle would infallibly have reduced the demand for that article, forth came the decisive argument of, Sirs, by this craft we have our wealth, and should this Paul turn away the people from the worship of gods made with hands, thereby much damage would accrue to our trade. Why, my brethren, if this argument is to be admitted, there

is not one conceivable benefit that can be offered for the acceptance of the species. Would it not be well, if all the men of reading in the country were to be diverted from the poison which lurks in many a mischievous publication—and should this blessed reformation be effected, are there none to be found who would feel that much damage had accrued to their trade? Would it not be well if those wretched sons of pleasure, before whom, if they repent not, there lieth all the dreariness of an unprovided eternity—would it not be well, that they were reclaimed from the maddening intoxication which speeds them on in the career of disobedience —and on this event too, would there be none to complain that much damage had accrued to their trade? Is it not well, that the infamy of the Slave Trade has been swept from the page of British history? and yet do not many of you remember how long the measure lay suspended, and that about twenty annual flotillas, burdened with the load of human wretchedness, were wafted across the Atlantic, while Parliament was deafened and overborne by unceasing clamours about the much damage that would accrue to the trade? And now, is it not well that peace has once more been given to the nations? and are you to follow up this goodly train of examples, by a single whisper of discontent about the much damage that will accrue to your trade? No, my brethren, I will not let down a single inch of the Christian requirement that lies upon you. Should a sweeping tide of bankruptcy set in upon the land, and reduce every individual who now hears me, to the very humblest condition

in society, God stands pledged to give food and raiment to all who depend upon Him;—and it is not fair to make others bleed, that you may roll in affluence;—it is not fair to desolate thousands of families, that yours may be upheld in luxury and splendour—and your best, and noblest, and kindest part is, to throw yourself on the promises of God, and he will hide you and your little ones in the secret of his pavilion, till these calamities be overpast.

III. I trust it is evident from all that has been said, how it is only by the extension of Christian principle among the people of the earth, that the atrocities of war will at length be swept away from it; and that each of us is hastening the commencement of that blissful period, who, in his own sphere, is doing all that in him lies to bring his own heart, and the hearts of others, under the supreme influence of this principle. It is public opinion, which, in the long run, governs the world; and while I look with confidence to a gradual revolution in the state of public opinion, from the omnipotence of gospel truth working its silent, but effectual, way through the families of mankind—yet I will not deny, that much may be done to accelerate the advent of perpetual and universal peace, by a distinct body of men embarking their every talent, and their every acquirement, in the prosecution of this, as a distinct object. This was the way in which, a few years ago, the British public were gained over to the cause of Africa. This is the way in which some of the other prophecies of the Bible are at

this moment hastening to their accomplishment; and it is in this way, I apprehend, that the prophecy of my text may be indebted for its speedier fulfilment to the agency of men, selecting this as the assigned field on which their philanthropy shall expatiate. Were each individual member of such a scheme to prosecute his own walk, and come forward with his own peculiar contribution, the fruit of the united labours of all would be one of the finest collections of Christian eloquence, and of enlightened morals, and of sound political philosophy, that ever was presented to the world. I could not fasten on another cause more fitted to call forth such a variety of talent, and to rally around it so many of the generous and accomplished sons of humanity, and to give each of them a devotedness and a power far beyond whatever could be sent into the hearts of enthusiasts, by the mere impulse of literary ambition.

Let one take up the question of war in its principle, and make the full weight of his moral severity rest upon it, and upon all its abominations. Let another take up the question of war in its consequences, and bring his every power of graphical description to the task of presenting an awakened public with an impressive detail of its cruelties, and its horrors. Let another neutralize the poetry of war, and dismantle it of all those bewitching splendours, which the hand of misguided genius has thrown over it. Let another teach the world a truer, and more magnanimous path to national glory, than any country of the world has yet walked in. Let another tell, with irresistible

argument, how the Christian ethics of a nation is at one with the Christian ethics of its humblest individual. Let another bring all the resources of his political science to unfold the vast energies of defensive war, and show, that, instead of that ceaseless jealousy and disquietude which are ever keeping alive the flame of hostility among the nations, each may wait in prepared security, till the first footstep of an invader shall be the signal for mustering around the standard of its outraged rights, all the steel, and spirit, and patriotism of the country. Let another pour the light of modern speculation into the mysteries of trade, and prove that not a single war has been undertaken for any of its objects, where the millions and the millions more which were lavished on the cause, have not all been cheated away from us by the phantom of an imaginary interest. This may look to many like the Utopianism of a romantic anticipation—but I shall never despair of the cause of truth addressed to a Christian public, when the clear light of principle can be brought to every one of its positions, and when its practical and conclusive establishment forms one of the most distinct of Heaven's prophecies—"that men shall beat their swords into plough-shares, and their spears into pruning-hooks—and that nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn the art of war any more."

THE DOCTRINE OF CHRISTIAN CHARITY APPLIED TO THE CASE OF RELIGIOUS DIFFERENCES:

A

SERMON

PREACHED BEFORE THE

AUXILIARY SOCIETY, GLASGOW,

TO

THE HIBERNIAN SOCIETY,

FOR

ESTABLISHING SCHOOLS, AND CIRCULATING THE HOLY SCRIPTURES IN IRELAND.

PREFACE.

If the question were put, what is Popery? an answer might be given by the enumeration of what are conceived to be its leading principles. Without at all inquiring whether the conception be a just one or not, there are many persons who would tell us, that the members of this denomination ascribe an infallibility to the Pope; and that they hold the doctrine of transubstantiation; and that they offer religious worship to departed saints, and render an external homage to images; and that they give such an importance to the ceremonial of extreme unction, as to conceive, that by the administration of it, all the guilt of the most worthless and unrenewed character is expiated and done away.—It is enough to mark our aversion to these positions and practices, that we say, that every one of them is unscriptural; and that, if this be a real portraiture of Popery, it is a religion which has no foundation in truth or in the Bible. But it is altogether a different question, in how far Popery, as thus defined, is actually realized by those men who wear the name and the profession of it. Whether this was ever the Popery of a past age, is a question of erudition, into which we propose not to enter. And whether this be the Popery of any people of the present age, is a question of observation, into which we propose not to enter. We confine ourselves to the object of looking into our own hearts, and of looking to those who are immediately around us, with the view of ascertaining whether the contamination and the substantial mischief of these alleged principles might not be detected on a nearer field of observation.

We are all aware that such an attempt as this is not enough to satisfy many Protestants, or to fill up the measure of their zeal against what they hold to be a most blasphemous and pestilential

heresy. They would not merely demand the disavowal of a corrupt system—but they would like to see it attached with all its deformities in the form of a personal charge to the men of a certain prominent and visible denomination. Now we do not see how the former demand can be more effectually met, than by the denunciation of this system, under whatever shape, or in whatever quarter of society, it may be found.—Nor do we conceive how a more honest and decisive seal of reprobation can be set upon it, than by the expression of a dislike so strong and so irreconcileable, as to be felt, even when it obtrudes upon our notice any of its features amongst the individuals of our own connection, and offers itself to view under the screen of an ostensible Protestantism. As to the latter demand, we frankly confess that we are not historically enough acquainted with the present state of the Catholic mind, to be at all able to comply with it. But should any member of that persuasion come forward with his own explanations, and give such a mitigated view of the peculiarities of Catholics, as to leave the great evangelical doctrines of faith and repentance unimpaired by them, and state that an averment of the Bible has never, in his instance, been neutralized or practically stript of its authority, by an averment of Popes or of Councils;—on what principle of candour shall the recognition of a common Christianity be withheld from him? Is it not better to confine our animadversion to the principles of the system, and to let persons alone: and if these persons shall step forward with the affirmation that the system is imaginary, or that, at least, it has no actual residence with them, whether is it the more Christian exhibition on our part, that we exercise, in their behalf, the charity which believeth all things, or that we pertinaciously keep by a charge, the truth of which they solemnly disclaim?

SERMON III.

DOCTRINE OF CHRISTIAN CHARITY.

"And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?—Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and behold a beam is in thine own eye?—Thou hypocrite! first cast out the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye."—MATTHEW vii. 3—5.

THE word beam suggests the idea of a rafter; and it looks very strange that a thing of such magnitude should be at all conceived to have its seat or fixture in the eye. To remove, by a single sentence, this misapprehension, I shall just say, that the word in the original signifies also a thorn, a something that the eye has room for, but at the same time much larger than a mote, and which must, therefore, have a more powerful effect in deranging the vision, and preventing a man from forming a right estimate of the object he is looking at. Take this along with you, and the three verses will run thus:—"Why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the thorn that is in thine own eye? Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and behold a thorn is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite! first cast out the thorn out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see

clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye."

In my farther observations on this passage, I shall first introduce what I propose to make the main subject of my discourse, by a very short application of the leading principle of my text, to the case of those judgments that we are so ready to pronounce on each other in private life. And I shall, secondly, proceed to the main subject, viz. that more general kind of judgment which we are apt to pass on the men of a different persuasion, in matters of religion.

I. Every fault of conduct in the outer man, may be run up to some defect of principle in the inner man. It is this defect of principle, which gives the fault all its criminality. It is this alone, which makes it odious in the sight of God. It is upon this that the condemnation of the law rests; and on the day of judgment, when the secrets of all hearts shall be laid open, it will be the share that the heart had in the matter, which will form the great topic of examination, when the deeds done in the body pass under the review of the Son of God. For example, it is a fault to speak evil one of another; but the essence of the fault lies in the want of that charity, which thinketh no ill. Had the heart been filled with this principle, no such bad thing as slander would have come out of it; but if the heart be not filled with this principle, and in its stead there be the operation of envy,—or a desire to avenge yourselves of others, by getting the judgment of men to go against them—or

a taste for the ludicrous, which, rather than be ungratified, will expose the peculiarities of the absent to the mirth of a company,—or the idle and thoughtless levity of gossiping, which cannot be checked by any consideration of the mischief that may be done by its indulgence;—I say, if any or all of these, take up that room in the heart, which should have been filled with charity, and sent forth the fruits of it, then the stream will just be as the fountain, and out of the treasure of the evil heart, there will flow that evil practice of censoriousness, on which the gospel of Christ pronounces its severe and decisive condemnation.

But though all evil-speaking be referable to the want of a good, or the existence of an evil principle in the heart, yet there is one style of evil-speaking different from another; and you can easily conceive how a man addicted to one way of it, may hate, and despise, and have a mortal antipathy, to another way of it. In this case, it is not the thing itself in its essential deformity that he condemns; it is some of the disgusting accompaniments of the thing; and while these excite his condemnation, and he views the man in whom they are realized, as every way worthy of being reprobated, he may not be aware, all the while, that in himself there exists an equal, and perhaps, a much larger portion of that very principle, which he should be reprobated for. The forms of evil-speaking break out into manifold varieties. There is the soft insinuation. There is the resentful outcry. There is the manly and indignant disapproval. There is the invective of vulgar malignity. There

is the poignancy of satirical remark. There is the giddiness of mere volatility, which trips so carelessly along, and spreads its entertaining levities over a gay and light-hearted party. These are all so many transgressions of one and the same duty; and you can easily conceive an enlightened Christian sitting in judgment over them all, and taking hold of the right principle upon which he would condemn them all; and which, if brought to bear with efficacy on the consciences of the different offenders, would not merely silence the passionate evil-speaker out of his outrageous exclamations, and restrain the malignant evil-speaker from his deliberate thrusts at the reputation of the absent; but would rebuke the humorous evil-speaker out of his fanciful and amusing sketches, and the gossiping evil-speaker out of his tiresome and never-ending narratives. Now you may further conceive, how a man who realizes upon his own character one of these varieties, might have a positive dislike to another of them; how the open and generous-hearted denouncer of what is wrong, may hate from his very soul the poison of a sly and secret insinuation; how he who delivers himself in the chastened and well-bred tone of a gentleman, may recoil from the violence of an unmannerly invective; how he who enjoys the ridiculous of character, may be hurt and offended at hearing of the criminal of character;—and thus each, with the thorn in his own eye, may advert with regret and disapprobation to the mote in his brother's eye.

Now, mark the two advantages which arise from every man bringing himself to a strict examination,

that he may if possible find out the principle of that fault in his own mind, which he conceives to deform the doings and the character of another. His attention is carried away from the mere accompaniment of the fault to its actual and constituting essence. He pursues his search from the outward and accidental varieties, to the one principle which spreads the leaven of iniquity over them all. By looking into his own heart, he is made acquainted with the movements of this principle. When forced to disapprove of others, his disapprobation is not a mere matter of taste, or of education, but the entire and well-founded disapprobation of principle. He sees where the radical mischief of the whole business lies. He sees that if the principle of doing no ill were established within the heart, it would cut up by the root all evil-speaking in all its shapes and in all its modifications. His own diligent keeping of his own heart upon this subject would bring the matter into his frequent contemplation, and enable him to perceive where its essence and its malignity lay, and give him an enlightened judgment of it in all its effects and workings upon others; and thus, by the very progress of struggling against it, and watching against it, and praying against it, and in the strength of divine grace prevailing against it, and at length succeeding in pulling the thorn out of his own eye, he would see clearly to cast out the mote out of his brother's eye.

But another mighty advantage of this self-examination is, that the more a man does examine, the more does he discover the infirmities of his own

character. That very infirmity against which, in another, he might have protested with all the force of a vehement indignation, he might find lurking in his own bosom, though under the disguise of a different form. Such a discovery as this will temper his indignation. It will humble him into the meekness of wisdom. It will soften him into charity. It will infuse a candour and a gentleness into all his judgments. The struggle he has had with himself to keep down the sin he sees in another, will train him to an indulgence he might never have felt, had he been altogether blind to the diseases of his own moral constitution. When he tries to reform a neighbour, the attempt will be marked by all the mildness of one who is deeply conscious of his own frailties, and fearful of the exposures which he himself may have to endure. And I leave it to your own experience of human nature to determine, whether he bids fairer for success who rebukes with the intolerant tone of a man who is unconscious of his own blemishes; or he who, with all the spirituality of a humble and exercised Christian, endeavours to restore him who is overtaken in a fault, with the spirit of meekness, "considering himself lest he also be tempted."

Now the fault of evil-speaking is only one out of the many. The lesson of the text might be farther illustrated by other cases and other examples. I might specify the various forms of worldliness, and wilfulness, and fraud, and falsehood, and profanity, and show how the man who realizes these sins in one form, might pass his condemnatory sentence on the man who realizes the very same

sins in another form; and I might succeed in saying to the conviction of his conscience, even as Nathan said to David, "Thou art the man;" and might press home upon him the mighty task of self-examination; and set him from that to the task of diligent reform, that he might be enabled to see the fault of his neighbour more clearly, and rebuke it more gently, and winningly, and considerately. But my time restrains me from expatiating; and however great my reluctance at being withdrawn from the higher office of dealing with the hearts and the consciences of individuals, to any other office, which, however good in itself, bears a most minute and insignificant proportion to the former, yet I must not forget that I stand here as the advocate of a public Society;—and I therefore propose to throw the remainder of my discourse into such a train of observation as may bear upon its designs and its enterprises.

II. I now proceed, then, to the more general kind of judgment which we are apt to pass on men of a different persuasion in matters of religion,—There is something in the very circumstance of its being a different religion from our own, which, prior to all our acquaintance with its details, is calculated to repel and to alarm us. It is not the religion in which we have been educated. It is not the religion which furnishes us with our associations of sacredness. Nay, it is a religion, which, if admitted into our creed, would tear asunder all these associations. It would break up all the repose of our established habits. It would darken the

whole field of our accustomed contemplations. It would put to flight all those visions of the mind which stood linked with the favour of God, and the blissful prospects of eternity. It would unsettle, and disturb, and agitate; and this, not merely because it threw a doubtfulness over the question of our personal security, but because it shocked our dearest feelings of tenderness for that which we had been trained to love, and of veneration for that which we had been trained to look at in the aspect of awful and imposing solemnity.

Add to all this, the circumstance of its being a religion with the intolerance of which our fathers had to struggle unto the death; a religion which lighted up the fires of persecution in other days; a religion, which at one time put on a face of terror, and bathed its hands in the blood of cruel martyrdom; a religion, by resistance to which, the men of a departed generation are embalmed in the memory of the present, among the worthies of our established faith. We have only to contemplate the influence of these things, when handed down by tradition, and written in the most popular histories of the land, and told round the evening fire to the children of every cottage family, who listen in breathless wonderment to the tale of midnight alarm, and kindle at the battle-cry lifted by the patriots of a former age, when they made their noble stand for the outraged rights of conscience and of liberty; we have only to think of these things, and we shall cease our amazement, that such a religion, even though its faults and its merits be equally unknown, should light up a passionate aversion in many a

bosom, and have a recoiling sense of horror and sacrilege, and blasphemy associated with its very name.

Now Popery is just such a religion: and I appeal to many present, if, though ignorant of almost all its doctrines and all its distinctions, there does not spring up a quickly felt antipathy in their bosoms even at the mention of Popery. There can be no doubt, that for one or two generations, this feeling has been rapidly on the decline. But it still lurks, and operates, and spreads a very wide and sensible infusion over the great mass of our Scottish population. There is now a dormancy about it, and it does not break out into those rude and tumultuary surges, which at one time filled our streets with violence, and sent a ferment of jealousy and alarm over the whole face of our country. But we still meet with the traces of its existence. We feel it in our own bosoms when we hear of any of the ceremonials of Popery: and I just ask you to think of those peculiar sensations which rise within you at the mention of the holy water, or the consecrated wafer, or the extreme unction of the Catholic ritual. There is still a sensation of repugnance, though it be dim, and in its painfulness it be rapidly departing away from us; and I think that, even at this hour, should a Popish Chapel send up its lofty minarets, and spread a rich and expanded magnificence before the public eye, though many look with unmingled delight on the grandeur of the ascending pile, yet there may still be detected a visible expression of jealousy and offence in the side-long glance, and the inward and half-suppressed murmuring of the occasional passenger.

Now, is it not conceivable that such a traditional repugnance to Popery may exist in the very same mind, with a total ignorance of what those things are for which it merits our repugnance? May there not be a kind of sensitive recoil in the heart against this religion, while the understanding is entirely blind to those alone features which justify our dislike to it? May there not be all the violence of an antipathy within us at Popery, and there be at the same time within us all the faults and all the errors of Popery? May not the thorn be in our own eye, while the mote in our neighbour's eye is calling forth all the severity of our indignation? While we are sitting in the chair of judgment, and dealing forth from the eminence of a superior discernment, our invectives against what we think to be sacrilegious in the creed and practice of others, may it not be possible to detect in ourselves the same perversion of principle, the same idolatrous resistance to truth and righteousness; and surely, it well becomes us in this case, while we are so ready to precipitate our invectives upon the head of by-standers, to pass a humbling examination upon ourselves, that we may come to a more enlightened estimate of that which is the object of our condemnation; and that, when we condemn, we may do it with wisdom, and with the meekness of wisdom.

Let us therefore take a nearer look of Popery, and try to find out how much of Popery there is in the religion of Protestants.

But, let it be premised, that many of the disciples of this religion disclaim much of what we im-

pute to them; that the Popery of a former age may not be a fair specimen of the Popery of the present; that, in point of fact, many of its professors have evinced all the spirit of devout and enlightened Christians; that in many districts of Popery, the Bible is in full and active circulation; and that thus, while the name and externals are retained, and waken up all our traditional repugnance against it, there may be among thousands and tens of thousands of its nominal adherents, all the soul, and substance, and principle, and piety of a reformed faith. When I therefore enumerate the errors of Popery, I do not assert the extent to which they exist. I merely say that such errors are imputed to them; and instead of launching forth into severities against those who are thus charged, all I propose is, to direct you to the far more profitable and Christian employment of shaming ourselves out of these very errors, that we may know how to judge of others, and that we may do it with the tenderness of charity.

First, then, it is said of Papists that they ascribe an infallibility to the Pope, so that if he were to say one thing and the Bible another, his authority would carry it over the authority of God. And, think you, my brethren, that there is no such Popery among you? Is there no taking of your religion upon trust from another, when you should draw it fresh and unsullied from the fountain-head of inspiration? You all have, or you ought to have, Bibles; and how often is it repeated there, "Hearken diligently unto me?" Now, do you obey this requirement, by making the reading of

your Bibles a distinct and earnest exercise? Do you ever dare to bring your favourite minister to the tribunal of the word, or would you tremble at the presumption of such an attempt, so that the hearing of the word carries a greater authority over your mind than the reading of the word? Now this want of daring, this trembling at the very idea of a dissent from your minister, this indolent acquiescence in his doctrine, is just calling another man master; it is putting the authority of man over the authority of God; it is throwing yourself into a prostrate attitude at the footstool of human infallibility; it is not just kissing the toe of reverence, but it is the profounder degradation of the mind and of all its faculties: and without the name of Popery, —that name which lights up so ready an antipathy in your bosoms, your soul may be infected with the substantial poison, and your conscience be weighed down by the oppressive shackles of Popery. And all this, in the noon-day effulgence of a Protestant country, where the Bible, in your mother tongue, circulates among all your families, —where it may be met with in almost every shelf, and is ever soliciting you to look to the wisdom that is inscribed upon its pages. O! how tenderly should we deal with the prejudices of a rude and uneducated people, who have no Bibles, and no art of reading among them, to unlock its treasures, when we think that, even in this our land, the voice of human authority carries so mighty an influence along with it, and veneration for the word of God is darkened and polluted by a blind veneration for its interpreters.

We tremble to read of the fulminations that have issued in other days from a conclave of cardinals. Have we no conclaves, and no fulminations, and no orders of inquisition, in our own country? Is there no professing brotherhood, or no professing sister-hood, to deal their censorious invectives around them, upon the members of an excommunicated world? There is such a thing as a religious public. There is a "little flock," on the one hand, and a "world lying in wickedness," on the other. But have a care ye who think yourselves of the favoured few, how you never transgress the mildness, and charity, and unostentatious virtues of the gospel; lest you hold out a distorted picture of Christianity in your neighbourhood, and impose that as religion on the fancy of the credulous, which stands at as wide a distance from the religion of the New Testament, as do the services of an exploded superstition, or the mummeries of an antiquated ritual.

But, again, it is said of Papists, that they hold the monstrous doctrine of transubstantiation. Now a doctrine may be monstrous on two grounds. It may be monstrous on the ground of its absurdity, or it may be monstrous on the ground of its impiety. It must have a most practically mischievous effect on the conscience, should a communicant sit down at the table of the Lord; and think that the act of appointed remembrance is equivalent to a real sacrifice, and a real expiation; and leave the performance with a mind unburdened of all its past guilt, and resolved to incur fresh guilt to be wiped away by a fresh expiation. But in the sacraments of our own country, is there no crucifying of the

Lord afresh? Is there none of that which gives the doctrine of transubstantiation all its malignant influence on the hearts and lives of its proselytes? Is there no mysterious virtue annexed to the elements of this ordinance? Instead of being repaired to for the purpose of recruiting our languid affections to the Saviour, and strengthening our faith, and arming us with a firmer resolution, and more vigorous purpose of obedience, does the conscience of no communicant solace itself by the mere performance of the outward act, and suffer him to go back with a more reposing security to the follies, and vices, and indulgences of the world? Then, my brethren, his erroneous view of the sacrament may not be clothed in a term so appalling to the hearts and the feelings of Protestants as transubstantiation, but to it belongs all the immorality of transubstantiation; and the thorn must be pulled out of his eye, ere he can see clearly to cast the mote out of his brother's eye.

But, thirdly, it is said, that Papists worship saints, and fall down to graven images. This is very, very bad. "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." But let us take ourselves to task upon this charge also. Have we no consecrated names in the annals of reformation,—no worthies who hold too commanding a place, in the remembrance and affection of Protestants? Are there no departed theologians, whose works hold too domineering an ascendancy over the faith and practice of Christians? Are there no laborious compilations of other days, which, instead of interpreting the Bible, have given its

truths a shape, and a form, and an arrangement, that confer upon them another impression, and impart to them another influence, from the pure and original record? We may not bend the knee in any sensible chamber of imagery, at the remembrance of favourite saints. But do we not bend the understanding before the volumes of favourite authors, and do an homage to those representations of the minds of the men of other days, which should be exclusively given to the representation of the mind of the Spirit, as put down in the book of the Spirit's revelation? It is right that each of us should give the contribution of his own talents, and his own learning, to this most interesting cause; but let the great drift of our argument be to prop the authority of the Bible, and to turn the eye of earnestness upon its pages; for if any work, instead of exalting the Bible, shall be made, by the misjudging reverence of others, to stand in its place, then we introduce a false worship into the heart of a reformed country, and lay prostrate the conscience of men, under the yoke of a spurious authority.

But, fourthly and lastly,—for time does not permit such an enumeration, as would exhaust all the leading peculiarities ascribed to this faith,—it is stated, that by the form of a confession, in the last days of a sinner's life, and the ministration of extreme unction upon his death-bed, he may be sent securely to another world, with all the unrepented profligacy, and fraud, and wickedness of this world upon his forehead; that this is looked forward to, and counted upon by every Catholic,—

and sets him loose from all those anticipations which work upon the terror of other men,—and throws open to him an unbridled career, through the whole of which, he may wanton in all the varieties of criminal indulgence,—and at length, when death knocks at his door, if he just allow him time to send for his minister, and to hurry along with him, through the steps of an adjusted ceremonial, the man's passage through that dark vale, which carries him out of the world, is strewed with the promises of delusion,—that every painful remembrance of the past is stifled amid the splendours and the juggleries of an imposing ritual; and in place of conscience rising upon him, and charging him with the guilty track of disobedience he has run, and forcing him to flee, amid the agitations of his restless bed, to the blood of the great Atonement, and alarming him into an earnest cry for the clean heart and the right spirit; knowing that unless he be born again unto repentance, he shall perish;—why, my brethren, instead of these salutary exercises, we are told, that a fictitious hope is made to pour its treacherous sunshine into the bosom of a deceived Catholic,—that, when standing on the verge of eternity, he can cast a fearless eye over its dark and untravelled vastness,—and that, for the terror of its coming wrath, his guilty and unrenewed soul is filled with all the radiance and all the elevation of its anticipated glories.

O! my brethren, it is piteous to think of such a preparation, but it is just such a preparation as meets the sad experience of us all. The man, whose every affection has clung to the world, till

the last hour of his possibility to enjoy it; who never put forth an effort or a prayer to be delivered from the power of sin, till every faculty for its pleasures had expired; who, through the varied progress of his tastes and his desires, from amusement to dissipation, and from dissipation to business, had always a something in all the successive stages of his career, to take up his heart to the exclusion of Him who formed it;—why, such a man, who never thought of pressing the lessons of the minister upon his conscience, while life was vigorous, and the full swing of its delights and occupations could be indulged in,—do we never find, even in the bosom of this reformed country, that while his body retains all its health, his spirit retains all its hardihood; and not till the arrival of that week, or that month, or that year, when the last messenger begins to alarm him, does he think of sending to the man of God, a humble supplicant for his attendant prayers. Ah! my brethren, do you not think, amid the tones, and the sympathies, and the tears, which an affectionate pastor pours out in the fervency of his soul, and mingles with all his petitions, and all his addresses to the dying man, that no flattering unction ever steals upon him, to lull his conscience, and smooth the agony of his departure? Then, my brethren, you mistake it, you sadly mistake it; and even here, where I lift my voice among a crowd of men, in the prime and unbroken vigour of their days,—if even the youngest and likeliest of you all, shall, trusting to some future repentance, cherish the purpose of sin another hour, and not resolve at this critical and important Now, to break it all off,

by an act of firm abandonment, then be your abhorrence at Popery what it may, you are exemplifying the worst of its errors, and wrapping yourselves up in the cruellest and most inveterate of its delusions.

I have left myself very little time for the application of all this to the particular objects of our Society. First, Let it correct the very gross and vulgar tendency we all have to think, that the kingdom of God cometh with observation. That kingdom has its seat within us, and consists in the reign of principle over the hidden and invisible mind. The mere deposition of the Pope from that throne where he sits surrounded with the splendour of temporalities,—the mere ascendancy of Protestant princes, over the counsels and politics of the world,—the mere exclusion of Catholic subjects from our administrations and our Parliaments,—these things are all very observable, but they may all happen, without one inch of progress being made towards the establishment of that kingdom, which cometh not with observation. Why, my brethren, the supposition may be a very odd one, nor do I say that it is at all likely to be realized,—but for the sake of illustration, I will come forward with it. Conceive that the Spirit of God, accompanying the circulation of the word of God, were to introduce all its truths and all its lessons into the heart of every individual of the Catholic priesthood; and that the Pope himself, instead of being brought down in person from the secular eminence he occupies, were brought down in spirit, with all his lofty imaginations, to the captivity of the obedience of Christ,—then I am not prepared to assert, that under the

influence of this great Christian episcopacy, a mighty advancement may not be made in building up the kingdom of God, and in throwing down the kingdom of Satan, throughout all the territories of Catholic Christendom. And yet, with all this, the name of Catholic may be retained,—the external and visible marks of distinction, may be as prominent as ever,—and with all those insignia about them, which keep up our passionate antipathy to this denomination, there might not be a single ingredient in the spirit of its members, to merit our rational antipathy. I beg you will just take all this as an attempt at the illustration of what I count a very important principle;—and, to make the illustration more complete, let me take up the case of a Protestant country, and put the supposition, that, with the name of a pure and spiritual religion, the majority of its inhabitants are utter strangers to its power; that an indifference to the matters of faith and of eternity, works all the effect of a deep and fatal infidelity on their consciences; that the world engrosses every heart, and the kingdom which is not of this world, is virtually disowned and held in derision among the various classes and characters of society; that the spirit of the New Testament, is banished from our Parliaments, and banished from our Universities, and banished from the great bulk of our ecclesiastical establishments, and is only to be met with among a few inconsiderable men, who are scouted by the general voice as the fanatics and visionaries of the day;—then, my brethren, I am not to be charmed out of truth, and of principle, by the mockery of a name. Call such a

country reformed, as you may, it is full of the strong holds of Antichrist, from one end to the other of it; and there must be a revolution of sentiment there, as well as in the darkest regions of Popery, ere the "enemies of the Son of God be consumed by the breath of his mouth," or "Babylon the great be fallen."

Now, secondly, mark the influence of such a train of sentiment, on the spirit of those who are employed in spreading the light of reformation among a Catholic people. It will purify their aim, and give it a judicious direction, and chase away from their proceedings that offensive tone of arrogance which is calculated to irritate, and to beget a more determined obstinacy of prejudice than ever. Their great aim, to express it in one word, is to plant in the hearts of all men of all countries, the religion of the Bible. Their great direction will be toward the establishment of right principle; and in the prosecution of it, they will carefully avoid multiplying the points of irritation, by giving vent to their traditional repugnance against the less material forms of Popery. And the meek consciousness of that woful departure from vital Christianity, which has taken place even in the reformed countries of Christendom, will divest them of that repulsive superiority which, I fear, has gone far to defeat the success of many an attempt, upon many an enemy of the truth as it is in Jesus. "The whole amount of our message, is to furnish you with the Bible, and to furnish you with the art of reading it. We think the lessons of this book well fitted to chase away the manifold errors, which rankle in

the bos .n of our own country. You are the subjects of error as well as we; and we trust that you will find them useful, in enlightening the prejudices, and in aiding the frailties to which, as the children of one common humanity, we are all liable. Amongst us, there is a mighty deference to the authority of man: if this exist among you, here is a book which tells us to call no man master, and delivers us from the fallibility of human opinions. Amongst us, there is a delusive confidence in the forms of godliness, with little of its power: here is a book, which tells us that holiness of life is the great end of all our ceremonies, and of all our sacraments. Amongst us there is a host of theologians each wielding his separate authority over the creed and the conscience of his countrymen, and you, Catholics, have justly reproached us with our manifold and never-ending varieties; but here is a book, the influence of which is throwing all these differences into the back-ground, and bringing forward those great and substantial points of agreement, which lead us to recognise the man of another creed to be essentially a Christian,—and we want to widen this circle of fellowship, that we may be permitted to live in the exercise of one faith and of one charity along with you. Amongst us, the great bulk of men pass through life forgetful of eternity, and think, that by the sighs and the ministrations of their last days, they will earn all the blessedness of its ever-during rewards. But here is a book which tells us that we should seek first the kingdom of God; and will not let us off with any other repentance than repentance now; and tells us, what we trust,

will light with greater energy on your consciences than it has ever done upon ours, that we should haste and make no delay to keep the commandments." O! my brethren, let us not despair that such arguments, urged by the mild charity which adorns the Bible, and followed up by its circulation, will at length tell on the firmest defences that bigotry ever raised around the conscience and the principles of men—and that, out of those jarring elements which threaten our empire with a wild war of turbulence and disorder, we shall by the blessing of God be enabled to cement all its members into one great and harmonious family.

I conclude with saying, that, mainly and substantially speaking, I conceive this to be the very spirit of the attempt that is now making by the Society I am now pleading for. It is not an offensive declaration of war against Popery. It is true that it may be looked upon virtually as a measure of hostility against the errors of Catholics, but no more than it is a measure of hostility against the errors of Protestants. The light of truth is fitted to chase away all error, and there is something in that Bible which the agents of our Society are now teaching so assiduously, that is not more humbling and more severe on the general spirit of Ireland, than it is on the general spirit of our own country. It is true, that some of the Catholics set their face against the establishment of our Schools, but this resistance to education is not peculiar to them. It is to be met with in England. It is to be met with in our own boasted and beloved Scotland. It is to be met with even

among the enlightened classes of British Society—and shall we speak of it as if it fastened a peculiar stigma on that Country, which we have left to languish in depression and ignorance for so many generations? But, this resistance on the part of Catholics is far from general. In one district the teachers of our Schools are chiefly Roman Catholics; many of the School Houses are Catholic Chapels; and the great majority of the Scholars are children of Catholic parents, who have appeared not a little elated that their children have proved more expert in their Scriptural quotations than their neighbours.—Call you not this an auspicious commencement? Is there no loosening of prejudice here? Do you not perceive that the firmest system of bigotry, ever erected over the minds of a prostrate population, must give way before the continued operation of such an expedient as this? There is no one device of human policy that has done so much for Ireland in a whole century, as is now doing by the progress of education, and the freer circulation of the gospel of light through the dark mass and interior of their peasantry. Let me crave the assistance of the public in this place to one of the most powerful instruments, that has yet been set a-going for helping forward this animating cause. It is an instrument ready made to your hand. The Hibernian Society have already established 347 Schools in our Sister Country, a number equal to one-third of the parishes in Scotland; and they are dealing out education, a pure Scriptural education, to 27,700 Irish children. It will be a disgrace to us if we do not signalize our-

selves in such a business as this. We talk of the Irish as a wild and uncivilized people. It will be the indication of a very gross and uncivilized public at home, if we restrict our interchange with the men of the opposite shore, to the one interchange of merchandise. Let the rudeness of the Irish be what it may, sure I am, that there is much in their constitutional character to encourage us in this enterprise. They have many good points and engaging properties about them. I speak not of that peculiar style of genius and of eloquence, which gives such fascination to the poets, the authors, the orators of Ireland. I speak of the great mass, and I do think that I perceive a something in the natural character of Ireland, which draws me more attractively to the love of its people, than any other picture of national manners ever has inspired. Even amid the wildest extravagance of that humour which sits so visibly and so universally on the countenance of the Irish population, I can see a heart and a social sympathy along with it. Amid all the wayward and ungovernable flights of that rare pleasantry which belongs to them, there is a something by which the bosom of an Irishman can be seriously and permanently affected, and which I think in judicious hands is convertible into the finest results on the ultimate character of that people. It strikes me, that, of all the men on the face of the earth, they would be the worst fitted to withstand the expression of honest, frank, liberal, and persevering kindness;—that if they saw there was no artful policy in the attentions by which you plied them, but that an upright and firmly sustain-

ed benevolence lay at the bottom of all your exertions for the best interest of their families;—could they attain the conviction, that, amid all the contempt and all the resistance you experienced from their hands, there still existed in your bosoms an unquelled and an undissembled love for them and for their children;—could they see the working of this principle divested of every treacherous and suspicious symptom, and unwearied amid every discouragement in prosecuting the task of their substantial amelioration,—Why, my brethren, let all this come to be seen, and in a few years I trust our devoted missionaries will bring it before them broad and undeniable as the light of day, and those hearts that are now shut against you in sullenness and disdain will be subdued into tenderness; the strong emotions of gratitude and nature will at length find their way through all the barriers of prejudice; and a people whom no penalties could turn, whom no terror of military violence could overcome, who kept on a scowling front of hostility that was not to be softened, while war spread its desolating cruelties over their unhappy land,—this very people will do homage to the omnipotence of charity, and when the mighty armour of Christian kindness is brought to bear upon them, it will be found to be irresistible.

APPENDIX.

Extracts from the Eleventh Annual Report of the Hibernian Society, for Establishing Schools, and Circulating the Holy Scriptures in Ireland. London, 1817.

THE Committee are persuaded, that among the numerous Institutions which the divine power and goodness have raised up in this kingdom, the Hibernian Society, if duly considered, will stand very high in the scale of moral and religious importance; and they are happy to add, that the present Report will present to its worthy supporters, continued and additional instances of the practicability of its designs, and the success of its operations.

In the good work of establishing Schools for the education of the children of the poor, in Ireland, the Committee had proceeded so far, at the time of holding the last General Meeting, as to report, that the number of Schools exceeded three hundred; and that the children and adults educated therein were upwards of nineteen thousand. They have now the pleasure to state, that, by the annual return which was made up to Christmas last, the number of Schools is 347; and the children and adults educated therein, are 27.776.

Such is the endearing and interesting spectacle which the present state of the labours of the Society presents to its benevolent supporters. Every Parent, every Christian, and every Briton must rejoice in the accomplishment of so much good to Ireland, where it was so peculiarly needed; and it is of such a nature, and is in such a course of extension and increase, as to afford the most reasonable expectations of enlarged and permanent benefits to that part of the united kingdom.

The Committee are happy to state, that the regulations for the conduct of the Schools are in full operation, and that the Inspectors are active and circumspect. The progress of the

children in learning to read and in committing the Scriptures to memory, and the interest that even Catholic parents feel in having their little ones appear with credit at the inspections, are truly gratifying. The attention of the Masters, in general, to the import of the sacred word, is pleasingly on the increase: and among such as have had their own understandings enlightened and informed, there exists a spirit of emulation to have their pupils excel in giving suitable answers to questions relating to the meaning of the passages which they repeat.

These instances evidently show the immediate and direct influence which the Schools produce on the minds of the parents of the children who are educated therein: and that an emanation of Scripture light, and a portion of religious interest of the most important and useful kind, are introduced into the humble cottages of the poor. These now have some "light in their dwellings," in the midst of surrounding darkness and superstition; which, however, begins to be penetrated with the beams of divine truth, and to be impresed with that word which is "quick and powerful, and a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." On this interesting subject, a most valuable correspondent of the Committee thus writes:—

"From the many applications I receive from individuals from different parts of the country for Bibles and Testaments, there is strong evidence to the spreading of religious inquiry among the mass of the people. Many of them come from places remote from any of the schools; but I always find that anxiety for the Scriptures has been excited by converse with some who have been pupils therein, who have lived in the neighbourhood of the Schools, or have been in some other ways immediately or remotely connected with them.

"Could the moral and religious improvement of the human mind be as easily discovered as the agricultural improvement of a country, those numerous districts where the Schools have been for any time established, would be found to exhibit a striking contrast to those wherein they have not yet taken place. While these would be seen in all the nakedness of sterility, or fruitful only in the production of noxious weeds; in the other it would appear

that in a great degree the fallow ground has been broken up, the good seed sown and in a state of vegetation, waiting for the early and latter rain; in many, the appearance of a healthful crop would gladden the eye, and in some, the fields would appear already white unto the harvest.

"The great increase in the number of the Schools; the amazing anxiety for the Scriptures which they have been the means of exciting in every district; the increasing demand for evening Schools for the instruction of the adult population,—all pressingly call for such a supply of Bibles and Testaments as I am unable to meet. Were the wonders doing in this country by the instrumentality of the Hibernian Society fully known in England, and their importance rightly appreciated, no Society would be found deserving of greater support."

The Committee continue to give the greatest encouragement to the instruction of adults in the vicinity of the Schools; and they receive the most pleasing accounts of the efficacy of the word of God, in the enlightening of the minds of those who probably would never have had an opportunity of reading the Scriptures or of hearing them read, had it not been for the free Schools which this Society has established, and for the numerous copies of the Divine word which it has industriously circulated. Indeed, the Visitors to the Schools perceive and acknowledge, that, *were it not for the labours of this Institution it would be impossible for the Bible Societies to get the Scriptures into the hands of the Catholics*, the great mass of the population of Ireland.

The formation of Irish classes in the Schools which are appropriate thereto, continues to be sedulously promoted. An additional allowance has been granted to the Masters for their Irish Testament classes; and this has powerfully operated to increase the demand for Irish Testaments, both in the day Schools, and also in those which are held in the evening, for teaching the adults.

The Committee could adduce additional instances of approbation and support from some of the Catholic Clergy, both of the Society's Schools, and of its exertions to circulate the Scriptures; but the limits of this Report will not permit an enlargement on this pleasing and interesting subject. If, however, the views and objects of this Institution have only commended themselves as yet to a small part of the Catholic body; the Committee are happy

to state that, in the Protestant community, the high importance of the Hibernian Society increasingly arrests public attention; that the demands for Schools in almost every district are more numerous than can be attended to; and that in every place respectable individuals come forward, unsolicited, to carry into execution the benevolent designs of the Society. And here it is very appropriate and grateful to observe, that to the Clergy of the Established Church who have afforded their patronage to the Schools, and have condescended to act as Visitors, the Society are under very great obligations; and particularly to an excellent Dignitary of that Church, who has always entered into the views of the Society with a liberal mind, has furthered them with continued assiduity, and has recently from the pulpit pleaded the cause of the Institution, and thereby added to its celebrity and support. This last service called for the official thanks of the Committee. They were transmitted by the Treasurer, and the answer which has been received from this estimable personage is so characteristic of his piety and philanthropy, and so highly honourable to the Hibernian Society, that it would be unsuitable and injurious to withhold the following extract:—

"I have received your very kind letter, communicating the thanks of the Committee of the Hibernian Society of London, to me, for the sermon I preached in Sligo Church on their behalf; and for other services which the Committee are pleased kindly to notice, as rendered by me to the Schools under their patronage. Whatever little I have been enabled to do, I have felt that therein I have been doing the best service I could, to this quarter of my *poor benighted* country. And I thank God, that I see the exertions which the Society has made already (and they have been great) so largely owned of Him. I am persuaded that nothing is calculated so much, under the divine blessing, to dispel the gross darkness that has covered this land, for so many ages, as such a system of general Scriptural education, as that adopted by your Society. And I have to acknowledge that the establishment of the Society's Schools in the vicinity of my ministerial duties, has proved the happy instrument of a great enlargement of utterance and usefulness to me; and never more did I experience this enlargement, than on the late occasion of my visiting Sligo, to advocate the cause of the Society. If I have done this with any degree of

success, I desire to thank, and give glory to God. Surely you well deserve the cordial co-operation of the Irish public; and you call forth from Irish Christians, thanksgivings to God, for the grace bestowed upon you."

It has been noticed that the number of children and adults taught in the Society's Schools has increased, in the course of the last year, from 19,000 to 27,000, and that requisitions for additional Schools, are far more numerous than can be complied with. It will also be remembered, that at the time of holding the last Annual Meeting, the expenditure of the Society had exceeded its income upwards of £600. In this conflict of an enlarged establishment and a deficient revenue, of encouraging prospects and limited means, the Committee have endeavoured to increase the funds of the Society, and to lessen the expenses of its future operations. To obtain the first mentioned benefit, they have transmitted a circular letter to Ministers generally, in town and country, describing the state of the Institution, as to its importance, its usefulness, and its necessities; urging them to interest themselves, in procuring Subscriptions and Donations; and particularly and earnestly requesting them to incorporate it amongst those other excellent Societies, for the assistance of which Auxiliary Institutions have in so many places been established. These dispense their tributary streams with fertilizing and invigorating energies; and if, in their course, they were permitted to visit and enrich the Hibernian Society, Ireland would greatly benefit by the diffusion, and would ardently bless her pious and liberal benefactors.—With regard to lessening the expense of future operations, the Committee have endeavoured to connect the formation of *new* Schools, with an Annual Subscription; and, in this way, it is to be hoped, that many of the resident noblemen and gentlemen in Ireland, will assist in carrying into effect the designs, and in relieving the funds, of the Hibernian Society.

It has been truly gratifying to the Committee, to state the considerable increase of the Society's Schools, and the evident utility and success of its operations; but it is with regret that they view the inadequacy of the funds to defray the necessary expenses of the Institution; and with anxiety that they contrast the openings of Providence which present themselves, for exertions of a very extensive nature—in the highest degree important, and promising

the most happy results,—with the alarming deficiency of pecuniary means for following those providential leadings, with the energies and the hopes which they are so well calculated to inspire.

With respect to the progress which has already been made in fulfilling the purposes for which the Society was formed, it may be observed,—that its advances in extension of operations, and its success by its means and instruments, have proved in the highest degree pleasing and satisfactory. It was not till about the year 1809, that Schools were established in Ireland, under the patronage of the Hibernian Society; from which period to the present time, these establishments have so increased as to include upwards of 27,000 pupils. And when it is considered that the Schools have been formed, and the children collected therein, for the purpose of imparting the benefits of education to the lower classes of the people, who had neither the means nor the hopes of these benefits from any other quarter; and also of diffusing the blessings of pure Scriptural instruction among those to whom the policy and the power of their superiors forbid the introduction of these blessings; surely it must be acknowledged, that the designs and operations of the Society have been appropriate and efficient, for the removal of the greatest of evils, and for the production of the most essential and important good. In fact, the gradually increasing operations of the Society have greatly exceeded its progressive means of support; its designs have been truly laudable and excellent, its means and instruments well adapted to execute them, and the sphere of its labours admirably calculated to gratify British benevolence, and to reward Christian zeal. Under all these circumstances, it is a matter of surprise and regret, that the Income of this Institution, arising from Annual Subscriptions, does not amount to £500; whilst its Annual Expenditure is upwards of £4000!! The deficiency has, in part, been supplied by Donations and Collections, and also by assistance received from Auxiliary Societies; but the arrears at length amount to a sum (£1605) which must have become burdensome to the Treasurer, embarrassing to the Committee, and prejudicial to the interest of the Society.

To relieve it of this debt, is the anxious wish of its Committee, and must be the earnest desire of its Members. And when it is considered, as having arisen out of the actual prosperity of the

cause, which the Society was established to promote, and from the enlarged and successful exertions which it has been enabled to prosecute, the Committee are persuaded that every Member of the Institution will feel it to be his duty and his pleasure, to unite with them, in immediate and earnest efforts, to replenish and increase its funds, in order that the Society may be relieved from the pressure of present obligations, and be capacitated to enter on a course of additional labours, and of extensive and hopeful exertions.

That the operations of this Society should be stationary, whilst the most fair and promising prospects open for their extension; that the benefits of education which it has conferred, and the blessings of Scriptural instruction, which it has imparted, should be circumscribed comparatively to a few, while hundreds of thousands are perishing for lack of knowledge, is a state of things which must wound the feelings, and disappoint the hopes, of the supporters of the Institution.

That a work so truly important, that objects so highly benevolent, and that efforts so eminently successful, will be impeded or paralyzed for want of pecuniary support, the Committee cannot believe. For the appeal to Christian principles, feelings, and generosity, is made, in the present instance, to the religious public in Great Britain; whose noble liberality supports efforts of compassion and mercy, amongst the ignorant and the miserable, in the most distant parts of the world. And this liberality will surely not be withheld from the Hibernian Society, whose labours are directed to remove the afflicting spectacle of ignorance, superstition, immorality, and mental degradation, which the lower classes of the community in Ireland exhibit; to place our "brethren according to the flesh," our fellow subjects, on the same high ground of moral and national advantage on which we stand, and thus to promote their best interest, their highest happiness, and their eternal salvation.

April 4, 1838.

It is deeply to be regretted that a pure Scriptural education has been to such an extent superseded in Ireland by its present National System of Schools.

ON THE RESPECT DUE TO ANTIQUITY:

A

SERMON,

PREACHED ON FRIDAY, MAY 11, 1827,

AT THE OPENING

OF THE

SCOTCH NATIONAL CHURCH, LONDON.

SERMON IV.

ON THE RESPECT DUE TO ANTIQUITY.

'Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk therein."—JEREMIAH vi. 16.

IT has been well said by Lord Bacon, that the antiquity of past ages is the youth of the world—and therefore it is an inversion of the right order, to look for greater wisdom in some former generation than there should be in our present day. "The time in which we now live," says this great philosopher, "is properly the ancient time, because now the world is ancient; and not that time which we call ancient, when we look in a retrograde direction, and by a computation backward from ourselves." There must be a delusion, then, in that homage which is given to the wisdom of antiquity, as if it bore the same superiority over the wisdom of the present times, which the wisdom of an old does over that of a young man. When we speak of the wisdom of any age, we mean the wisdom which at that period belongs to the collective mind of the species. But it is an older species at present than it was in those days, called by us, the days of antiquity. It is now both more venerable in years, and carries a greater weight of experi-

ence. It was a child before the flood; and if it have not yet become a man, it is nearer to manhood now than it was then. Therefore, when reviewing the notions and the usages of our forefathers we, instead of casting off the instructions of a greater wisdom than our own, may, in fact, be putting away from us childish things. It is in vain to talk of Socrates, and Plato, and Aristotle. Only grant that there may still be as many good individual specimens of humanity as before; and a Socrates now, with all the additional lights which have sprung up in the course of intervening centuries to shine upon his understanding, would be a greatly wiser man than the Socrates of two thousand years ago. It is therefore well, in the great master of the New Philosophy, to have asserted the prerogative, and in fact the priority, of our present age; that to it belongs a more patriarchal glory than to all the ages of all the patriarchs; that our generation is a more hoary-headed chronicler, and is more richly laden with the truths and the treasures of wisdom, than any generation which has gone before it—the olden time, wherewith we blindly associate so much of reverence, being indeed the season of the world's youth, and the world's inexperience; and this our modern day being the true antiquity of the world.

But, however important thus to reduce the deference that is paid to antiquity; and with whatever grace and propriety it has been done by him who stands at the head of the greatest revolution in Philosophy—we shall incur the danger of running into most licentious waywardness, if we receive not

the principle, to which I have now adverted, with two modifications.

You will better conceive what these modifications are, by just figuring to yourself two distinct books, whence knowledge or wisdom may be drawn—one the book of the world's experience, the other, the book of God's revelation; the one, therefore, becoming richer, and more replete with instruction every day, by the perpetual additions which are making to it; the other, being that book from which no man can take away, neither can any man add thereunto.

Our first modification, then, is, that though, in regard to all experimental truth, the world should be wiser now than it was centuries ago, this is the fruit not of our contempt or our heedlessness in regard to former ages, but the fruit of our most respectful attention to the lessons which their history affords. In other words, as we are only wiser because of the now larger book of experience which is in our hands, we are not so to scorn antiquity, as to cast that book away from us; but we are to learn from antiquity, by giving the book our most assiduous perusal, while, at the same time, we sit in the exercise of our own free and independent judgment over the contents of it. Although we listen not to antiquity, as if she sent forth the voice of an oracle, yet we should look with most observant eye to all that antiquity sets before us. She is not to be the absolute mistress of our judgment, but still she presents the best materials on which the judgment of man can possibly be exercised. The only reason, truly, why the present age should be wiser

than the past, is, that it stands on that higher van tage ground which its progenitor had raised for it. But we should never have reached the vantage ground, if, utterly heedless of all that has gone before, we had spurned the informations and the science of previous generations away from us. The man of three-score should not be the wiser of his age, did a blight come over his memory, to obliterate all the experience and all the acquisitions of his former years. The very remembrance of his follies makes him wiser—and thus it is, that every succeeding race gathers a new store of instruction, not from the discoveries alone, but also from the devious absurdities and errors of all the races that had preceded it. The truth is, that an experiment may be as instructive by its failure as by its success—in the one case serving as a beacon, and in the other as a guide ; and so from the very errors and misgivings of former days might we gather, by the study of them, the most solid and important accessions to our wisdom. We do right in not submitting to the dictation of antiquity ; but that is no cause why we should refuse to be informed by her —for this were throwing us back again to the world's infancy, like the second childhood of him whom disease had bereft of all his recollections. Still we reserve the independence of our own judgment, while we take this retrospective survey, and ask for the old paths, and so compare them together as to separate the right from the wrong, and fix at length on the good way. And so, again, in the language of Bacon, " Antiquity deserveth that reverence, that men should make a stand thereupon,

and discover what is the best way; but when the discovery is well taken then to make progression."

On pondering well the view that has been now given, you will come to perceive how there is in truth a perfect harmony between the utmost independence on the dictates of antiquity on the one hand, and on the other the most deferential regard to all its informations.

But there is a second modification, which, in the case of a single individual of the species, it is easy to understand, and which we shall presently apply to the whole species. There is a wisdom distinct from knowledge; and one rich in the acquisitions of the latter, may practically be driven from the way of the former, by the headlong impulse of his vicious and wrong affections. Now, a book of wisdom may be taught in very early childhood. It may, it is true, be the product of the accumulated experience of all ages; but it also may, as being a book of moral instructions, and so dictated by the inspiration of a higher faculty than that of mere observation—it may, instead of having been produced by a slow experience, have been produced by the enlightened conscience of its author, although afterwards all experience would attest the way of its precepts to be a way of interest and of safety, as well as a way of excellence. The lessons of such a book may be urged upon man, and with all a parent's tenderness, from the outset of his education. He may have been trained by it to observe all the infant proprieties, and to lisp the infant's prayer. It may have been the guide and the companion of his boyhood; and not, perhaps, till in the wild mis-

rule of youthful profligacies and passions, did he shut his eyes to the pure religious light wherewith it had shone upon his ways. We may conceive of such a man, that, after many years of vicious indulgence, of growing and at length confirmed hardihood, of gradually decaying and now almost extinct sensibility,—we may conceive of this hackneyed veteran in the world and all its evil ways, that he is at once visited by the lights of conscience and memory; and that thus he is enabled to contrast the dislike, and the dissatisfaction, and the dreariness of heart, which now prey on the decline of his earthly existence, with all the comparative innocence which gladdened its hopeful and its happy morning. The wisdom of *his* manhood did not grow with its experience; for now that he looks back upon it, he finds it but a mortifying retrospect of wretchedness and folly; and the only way in which this experience can be of use to him now, is that it may serve as a foil by which to raise in his eyes the lustre and the loveliness of virtue. And as he bethinks him of his first, his early home, of the Sabbath piety which flourished there, and that holy atmosphere in which he was taught to breathe with kindred aspirations, he cannot picture to himself the bliss and the beauty of such a scene, mellowed as it is by the distance, perhaps, of half a century, and mingled with the dearest recollections of parents, and sisters, and other kindred now mouldering in the dust, he cannot recall for a moment this fond, though faded imagery, without sighing in the bitterness of his heart, after the good old way.

Now, what applies to one individual, may apply

to the species. As the world grows older, it may, by some sweeping obliteration of all its ancient documents, lapse again into second infancy; or even though it should retain all its experimental truth, and grow every day richer therein, yet it is conceivable that, from various causes, it may come to shut its eyes against that moral or that revealed truth, which both are the offspring of a higher source than mere human experience. The one, or moral truth, may be taught in all its perfection to man when an infant; and the other, or revealed truth, may have been delivered to the world when it was young. Neither can be added to by the faculty of observation; and, unlike to the lessons of philosophy, the lessons of morality and revelation do not accumulate by the succession of ages. And just as the individual man might deviate, in the progress of years, from the pure and perfect virtues that were inculcated upon his childhood, so the collective species might stray, in the progress of centuries, from that unsullied light which had been held forth to them by the lamp of revelation. In a prolonged course of waywardness, they may have wandered very far from the truth of heaven. They may have renounced all that docility and that duteous subordination which characterize the disciples of a former age. Like as the tyranny of youthful passions might overbear the authority of those instructions which had been given by an earthly parent, so the tyranny of prejudice might overbear the authority of the lessons and the laws which had been given to the world by our heavenly Father. And like as the great spiritual adversary of the

human race might, by the corrupt ascendancy which he wields over the hearts of men, seduce them from the piety of their early days—so, by means of a priesthood upon earth, standing forth to their prostrate and superstitious worshippers, and exercising over them all the power of Satan transformed into an angel of light, might he delude whole successive generations from the pure and primitive religion of their forefathers. And after, perhaps, a whole dreary millennium of guilt and of darkness, may some gifted individual arise, who can look, athwart the gloom, and descry the purer and the better age of Scripture light which lies beyond it. And as he compares all the errors and the mazes of that vast labyrinth into which so many generations had been led by the jugglery of deceivers, with that simple but shining path which conducts the believer unto glory, let us wonder not that the aspiration of his pious and patriotic heart should be for the good old way.

We now see wherein it is that the modern might excel the ancient. In regard to experimental truth, he can be as much wiser than his predecessors, as the veteran and the observant sage is wiser than the unpractised stripling, to whom the world is new, and who has yet all to learn of its wonders and of its ways. The voice that is now emitted from the schools, whether of physical or of political science, is the voice of the world's antiquity. The voice emitted from the same schools, in former ages, was the voice of the world's childhood, which then gave forth in lisping utterance the conceits and the crudities of its young unchastened speculation. But

in regard to things not experimental, in regard even to taste, or to imagination, or to moral principle, as well as to the stable and unchanging lessons of divine truth, there is no such advancement. For the perfecting of these, we have not to wait the slow processes of observation and discovery, handed down from one generation to another. They address themselves more immediately to the spirit's eye; and just as in the solar light of day, our forefathers saw the whole of visible creation as perfectly as we—so in the lights, whether of fancy, or of conscience, or of faith, they may have had as just and vivid a perception of Nature's beauties; or they may have had as ready a discrimination, and as religious a sense of all the proprieties of life; or they may have had a veneration as solemn, and an acquaintance as profound, with the mysteries of revelation, as the men of our modern and enlightened day. And, accordingly, we have as sweet or sublime an eloquence, and as transcendant a poetry, and as much both of the exquisite and noble in all the fine arts, and a morality as delicate and dignified, and, to crown the whole, as exalted and as informed a piety in the remoter periods of the world, as among ourselves, to whom the latter ends of the world have come. In respect of these, we are not on higher vantage ground than many of the generations that have gone by. But neither are we on lower vantage ground. We have access to the same objects. We are in possession of the same faculties. And, if between the age in which we live, and some bright and by-gone era, there should have intervened the deep and the long-pro-

tracted haze of many centuries, whether of barbarism in taste, or of profligacy in morals, or of superstition in Christianity, it will only heighten, by comparison, to our eyes, the glories of all that is excellent; and if again awakened to light and to liberty, it will only endear the more to our hearts the good old way.

We now proceed to the application of these preliminary remarks. We do not think that we presume too much, when we address ourselves to the majority of those who are here present, as if they were the friends and adherents of the Church of Scotland; and we shall endeavour, on the principles which we have just attempted to expound, first to appreciate the titles of the founders of that church to the respect and the confidence of its disciples—and, secondly, to consider how this respect should be qualified, so as not to degenerate into idolatry.

You will now perceive, first, how in regard to all experimental truth, the moderns, furnished as they are with a larger and more luminous book of experience, should, in the language of the Psalmist, "understand more than the ancients,"—and, secondly, how in regard to all theological truth, furnished as they are, with the same unaltered and unalterable book of revelation, they should at least understand as much as the ancients. Some would on this ground too, contend for the superiority of our modern day, because of the successive labours of that criticism wherewith the Sacred Volume is not amended or added to, but wherewith the ob-

securities which are upon the face of it, may be gradually cleared away. We do not lay great stress upon this observation, for, without depreciating the worth of Scriptural criticism, we cannot admit that all the additional light which is evolved by it, bears more than a very small fractional value to the breadth and the glory of that effulgence which shines from our English Bible, on the mind of an ordinary peasant. On either supposition, however, the most enlightened of our moderns, is, in regard to the one book, on fully equal, and in regard to the other, on a far higher vantage ground than the most enlightened of our ancients; and while it is our part to be as profoundly submissive as they, to all that has been said, and to all that has been done, by the God who is above us, here we sit in the entire right of our own independent judgment on all that has been said, and on all that has been done, by the men who have gone before us.

The great service then for which the Scottish and other reformers, in their respective countries, deserve the gratitude of posterity, is not that they shone upon us with any original light of their own, but simply that they cleared away a most grievous obstruction which had stood for ages, and intercepted from the eyes of mankind the light of the book of revelation. This they did, by asserting, in behalf of God, the paramount authority of his Scripture over the belief and the consciences of men; and asserting in behalf of man, his right of private judgment on the doctrine and the information which are contained in the oracles of God. This right of private judgment, you will observe,

is a right maintained not against the authority of God, but against the authority of men, who have either added to the oracles of God, or who have assumed to themselves the office of being the infallible and ultimate interpreters of his word. It was against this that our reformers went forth and prevailed. Theirs was a noble struggle for the spiritual liberties of the human race, against the papacy of Rome, and nobly did they acquit themselves of this holy warfare. At first it was a fearful conflict; when, on the one side, there was the whole strength of the secular arm, and, on the other, a few obscure but devoted men, whose only weapons were truth and prayer, and suffering constancy. And it is a cheering thought, and full of promise both for the moral and political destinies of our world, that, after all, the great and the governing force which men ultimately obey, is that of Opinion—that the cause of truth and righteousness, cradled by the rough hand of persecutors, and nurtured to maturity amid the terrors of fierce and fiery intolerance, is sure at length to overbear its adversaries—that contempt, and cruelty, and the decrees of arbitrary power, and the fires, of bloody martyrdom, are but its stepping stones to triumph—that in the heat and the hardihood of this sore discipline, it grows like the indestructible seed, and at last forces its resistless way to a superiority and a strength, before which the haughtiest potentates of our world are made to tremble. The reformation by Luther is far the proudest example of this in history—who, with nought but a sense of duty and the energies of his

own undaunted heart to sustain him, went forth single-handed against the hosts of a most obdurate corruption that filled all Europe, and had weathered the lapse of many centuries—who, by the might of his own uplifted arm, shook the authority of that high pontificate which had held the kings and the great ones of the earth in thraldom—who, with no other weapons than those of argument and Scripture, brought down from its peering altitude, that old spiritual tyranny, whose head reached unto heaven, and which had the entrenchments of deepest and strongest prejudice thrown around its base. When we can trace a result so magnificent as this to the workings of one solitary spirit—when the breast of Luther was capable of holding the germ or the embryo of the greatest revolution which the world ever saw—when we observe how many kindred spirits caught from his the fire of that noble inspiration by which it was actuated, and how powerfully the voice which he lifted up in the midst of Germany, was re-echoed to from the distant extremities of Europe by other voices,—O! let us not despair of truth's omnipotence, and of her triumph; but rest assured that, let despots combine to crush that moral energy which they shall never conquer, or to put out that flame which they shall find to be inextinguishable, there is now a glorious awakening abroad upon the world, and, in despite of all their policy, the days of its perfect light and its perfect liberty are coming.

Our own Knox was one in the likeness of Luther; and, perhaps, by nature of a firmer and hardier temperament than he. For it must be

observed of the German reformer, that there were about him a certain softness and love of tranquillity, which inclined him more to the shade of a studious retirement, than to the high places of society. The truth is, that most gladly would he have hid himself in some academic bower from the strifes and the storms of the open world; and sore was the struggle in his bosom ere he did adventure himself into the scenes of controversy from which he afterwards came off so victorious. It was fortunate for mankind, that though his love of peace was strong, his sense of duty was yet stronger, and that with a force which he felt to be imperious, it bore him through the heats and the hazards of his great warfare. Still it was at the expense of a most painful conflict with the tender and the tremulous sensibilities of his nature; for really, the man's native element was contemplation; and then did he find himself at his most appropriate exercise, when by the weapons, whether of a spiritual or literary championship, he fought, as he did, most manfully, the battles of the faith. Our countryman was altogether of sterner mood; and with a certain rigidity of fibre which the other had not, could better sustain himself in the fray, and the onset, and the close encounter of more immediate assailants. It has been said of him, in virtue of his impregnable nervous system, that he never feared the face of clay, and thus was he admirably fitted for the conduct of a high enterprise, amid the terrors of scowling royalty, and among the turbulent nobles of our land. Each had a part to sustain; and each was singularly qualified by Providence for the

performance of it,—the one, from his closet to spread the light of the principles of reformation over the face of Christendom—the other, in the boisterous politics of a court, or by the energy of his living voice from the pulpit, to do the executive work of reformation in one of the provinces of Christendom. It is obvious that Luther's was the superior station of the two; and that to him Knox was subordinate. And it is well in this bustling age, when there is so much of demand from the public functionaries of our Church for the labour of mere handiwork, and so little for that of literary preparation—it is well to notice, in the present instance, that while the practical talent of Knox carried him to such high ascendancy over the affairs of men, the pure and the powerful intellect of Luther won for him a higher ascendancy still—that through the medium of the press, and by virtue of scholarship alone, he bore with greater weight than did all his coadjutors on the living history of the world—and that, after all, it was from the cell of studious contemplation, from the silent depository of a musing and meditative spirit, there came forth the strongest and the most widely felt impulse on the mechanism of human society.

This then is the first great service which our Reformers achieved for mankind, even freedom of access to the Scriptures of truth, and the right of private judgment, explained as we have already done, over the contents of it. The second, which springs immediately from the first, but which deserves a separate consideration, is a theology not created by them, but a theology evolved by them,

and most eminently subservient both to the peace and the holiness of individuals, and to the general virtue of the world.

In Milner's Church History (a book that I would commend to the perusal of every devout and desirous Christian) we have a deeply interesting narrative of those mental processes through which Luther did at length find rest to his soul. There was nought whatever in all the penances of that laborious superstition wherein he had been educated, that could bring peace to his conscience, deeply stricken as it was by a sense of guilt, and of the holiness and awful majesty of that Being against whom he had offended. The Spirit of God seems, in the first instance, to have convinced him, and that most pungently and most profoundly, of the malignity of sin; and then it was that he felt how, in the whole round of the observances and absolutions of the Church of Rome, he could meet with no adequate Saviour. Meanwhile the law pursued him with its exactions and its terrors, and long and weary was the period of his spirit's agitations, ere he arrived at that hiding-place in which alone he could confidently feel that he was safe. He experienced, in regard to all the ceremonies of that corrupt ritual in which he had been trained, what the apostle affirms in regard to the not impure, but still imperfect ritual of Moses. "It is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sin." And thus, after the payment of all the debts and of all the drudgeries which his church had ordained for transgression, he felt that his sins were not taken away. He performed them, but

he was not purged by them; and so a sense of his unexpiated guilt still adhered to him, like an arrow sticking fast. It was then that he was led to ask for the old paths, that he might find out the good way, and walk therein. And it was not till the light of Scripture, beaming with its own direct radiance, and powerfully reflected from the pages of Augustine, shone upon his inquiry—not till he came within view of that great sacrifice which was made once for the sins of the world—not till the imaginary merit of human actions was all swept away, and there was substituted in its place the everlasting righteousness which Christ hath brought in—not till he saw the free and the welcome recourse which one and all have upon this righteousness by faith; and how, instead of springing from the toilsome but polluted obedience of man upon earth, it comes graciously down, in a descending ministration from heaven, upon those who believe,—Not till then, could he behold the reparation that was commensurate with the demand and the dignity of God's violated law. Now was he made, and for the first time, to understand, that under the canopy of the appointed mediatorship, he might continue to hear the thunders of the law, yet feel that they rolled innocuous over him: and this, my brethren, was the place both of enlargement and of quietness, where he found rest unto his soul.

It is this doctrine of imputed righteousness that gives to the gospel message the character of a joyful sound, the going forth of which among all nations shall at length both reconcile and regenerate the world. That were indeed a gladsome land, where

this truth was preached with acceptance and with power from all the pulpits. It is, in fact, the great bond of re-union between earth and heaven. It is like a cord of love let down from the upper sanctuary among the sinful men who are below; and with every sinner who takes hold, it proves the conductor, along which the virtues of heaven, as well as the peace of heaven, descend upon him. This doctrine of grace is altogether a doctrine according to godliness, and as much fitted to emancipate the heart from the tyranny of sin as from the terrors of that vengeance which is due to it. O, it is an idle fear, lest the preaching of the cross should spread the licentiousness of a proclaimed impunity among the people. All experience assures the opposite; and that in parishes which are most plied with the free offers of forgiveness through the blood of a satisfying atonement, there we have the best and the holiest families.

But it may be suspected, that although such a theology is the minister of peace, it cannot be the minister of holiness. Now, to those who have this suspicion, and who would represent the doctrine of justification by faith—that article as Luther calls it, of a standing or falling church—as adverse to the interests of virtue, I would put one question, and ask them to resolve it. How comes it that Scotland, which, of all the countries in Europe, is the most signalized by the rigid Calvinism of her pulpits, should also be the most signalized by the moral glory that sits on the aspect of her general population? How, in the name of mystery, should it happen that such a theology as ours

is conjoined with perhaps the yet most unvitiated peasantry among the nations of Christendom? The allegation against our Churches is, that in the argumentation of our abstract and speculative controversies, the people are so little schooled to the performance of good works. And how then is it, that in our courts of justice, when compared with the calendars of our sister kingdom, there should be so vastly less to do with their evil works? It is certainly a most important experience, that in that country where there is the most of Calvinism, there should be the least of crime,—that what may be called the most doctrinal nation of Europe, should, at the same time, be the least depraved—and the land wherein people are most deeply imbued with the principles of salvation by grace, should be the least distempered either by their week-day profligacies, or their Sabbath profanations. When Knox came over from the school of Geneva, he brought its strict, and, at that time, uncorrupted orthodoxy, along with him; and with it he pervaded all the formularies of that church which was founded by him; and not only did it flame abroad from all our pulpits, but, through our schools and our catechisms, it was brought down to the boyhood of our land; and from one generation to another, have our Scottish youth been familiarized to the sound of it from their very infancy; and unpromising as such a system of tuition might be in the eye of the mere academic moralist to the object of building up a virtuous and well-doing peasantry, certain it is, that, as the wholesale result, there has palpably come forth of it the most moral peasantry in

Europe notwithstanding. We know of great and grievous declensions, partly owing to the extension of our crowded cities being most inadequately followed up by such a multiplication of churches and parishes as might give fair scope to the energies of our ecclesiastical system; and principally, we fear to a declension from that very theology which has been denounced as the enemy of practical righteousness. But on this last topic we forbear to detain you; for vastly rather than expatiate on the degeneracies of what may be termed the middle age of the Church of Scotland, we incline to rejoice in the symptoms of its bright and blessed revival; and would therefore only say, that should, in mockery of these anticipations, the people of our land fall wholly away from the integrity of their forefathers—should there come a great and general deterioration in the worth of our common people, it will only be because preceded by a great and general deterioration in the zeal, and the doctrines, and the services of our clergymen. And if ever the families of our beloved land shall have apostatised from the virtues of the olden time, it will lie at the door of pastors who have been unfaithful to their trust, and of pastors who have apostatised from the good old divinity of other days.

But in this enumeration of Knox's services to Scotland, we must now pass on from the theology of this great reformer, to what may be called certain arrangements of ecclesiastical polity, which, through his means have been instituted in our land. And this is the subject, we think, upon which the schemes and the settlements of a comparatively

younger age lie most open to the animadversions of a now older world; for, while a perfect theology may be drawn at once from the now finished book of revelation, it is not a perfect ecclesiastical polity, but only one that admits of successive improvements, which can be drawn from the yet unfinished, but constantly progressive book of experience. On this ground, therefore, we shall consent to be enlightened by the venerable founder of our church, but we shall not consent to be enthralled by him; and, in fearlessly commenting both upon his excellencies and his errors, we feel ourselves to be only breathing in that element of liberty wherewith himself did impregnate the atmosphere of our now emancipated land—to be only following that noble example of independence which himself has bequeathed to us.

But in this part of our exposition, we must be very far shorter than the magnitude of the theme would require; for it is the misfortune of almost every occasional sermon, that the topics wherewith it stands associated, are far too unwieldy for one address—else we should have ventured to apply our introductory principles on the subject of ancient authorities and ancient times, more closely than we can now afford to the question, of that precise deference which is due to our illustrious Reformer. We should have especially urged it upon you, that neither he nor any other of the venerable Founders of our establishment, shone upon us in their own radiance, but only by a light reflected upon us from the pure and primary radiance of Scripture—and that, in fact, the great service which they rendered

to posterity, lay in the removal of those obstructions which stood between the truths of revelation, and the private independent judgment of men. It is in virtue of their exertions, that each may now look to the Bible with his own eyes, and not with the eyes of another; and we only use the privilege which they have won for us, when we try even themselves, either by that book of revelation, which shines as brightly upon us as upon them, or by that book of experience to which every century is adding so many leaves, and which at present shines more brightly than ever on the men of our now older world. The man of the day that now is, if thoroughly and intelligently read in that book, is as much wiser than the man of a distant antiquity, as the hoary-headed sage is wiser than a stripling. And in utter reversal of the prevailing tendency to idolize the men of other days, as if they were the patriarchs of our species, we affirm, that the Luthers, and the Knoxes, and the Calvins, and the Zuingliuses of old, are but as the youths of this world's history; and if there be any individuals now gifted with as great a degree of mental vigour and sagacity, they, with a larger book of experience before them, are, in truth, its bearded and its venerable patriarchs.

We shall now, however, confine ourselves to a very few sentences about three distinct matters of ecclesiastical polity—and that chiefly as specimens of the way in which a man of great authority and reputation may be deferred to when we think that he is in the right; and be questioned, when we doubt that he is in the wrong.

Our first, then, is a topic of the most cordial and unmixed eulogy. Knox was the chief compiler of the First Book of Discipline, and to him we owe our present system of parochial education. By that scheme of ecclesiastical polity, a school was required for every parish; and, had all its views been followed up, a college would have been erected in every notable town. On this inestimable service done to Scotland we surely do not need to expatiate. The very mention of it lights up an instant and enthusiastic approval in every bosom. And with all the veneration that is due on other grounds to our Reformer, we hold it among the proudest glories of his name, that it stands associated with an institution, which has spread abroad the light of a most beauteous moral decoration throughout all the hamlets of our land, and is dear to every Scottish heart as are the piety and the worth of its peasant families.

In the second topic, to which we shall advert, he was not so successful, but it argues not the less for his sagacity and his patriotism. We mean that contest, in which he failed, for the entire appropriation of the patrimony of the church to public objects, rather than that it should be seized upon by the rapacity of private individuals. On this matter I crave the reading of a short extract from the admirable biography of Knox by Dr. M'Crie—a work that should be enshrined in every public, and which is not sought after as it deserves, if it have not also a place in every private library of Scotland.

"Another source of distress to the Reformer, at this time, was a scheme which the courtiers had formed for altering the policy of the church, and

securing to themselves the principal part of the ecclesiastical revenues. This plan seems to have been concerted under the regency of Lennox; it began to be put into execution during that of Mar, and was afterwards completed by Morton. We have already had occasion to notice the aversion of many of the nobility to the Book of Discipline, and the principal source from which this aversion sprung. While the Earl of Murray administered the government, he prevented any new encroachments upon the rights of the church; but the succeeding regents were either less friendly to them, or less able to bridle the avarice of the more powerful nobles. Several of the richest benefices becoming vacant by the decease, or by the sequestration of the popish incumbents who had been permitted to retain them, it was necessary to determine in what manner they should be disposed of for the future. The church had uniformly required that their revenues should be divided, and applied to the support of the religious and the literary establishments; but with this demand the courtiers were by no means disposed to comply. At the same time, the total secularization of them was deemed too bold a step; nor could laymen, with any shadow of consistency, or by a valid title, hold benefices which the law declared to be ecclesiastical. The expedient resolved on was, that the bishoprics and other livings should be presented to certain ministers, who, previous to their admission, should make over the principal part of their revenues to such noblemen as had obtained the patronage of them from the court."

This most grievous error in the conduct of the Scottish reformation, (but for which Knox is not at all chargeable) is but little understood by the public at large, and in the statement of which therefore we do not expect to be greatly sympathized with. It was that compromise which took place between the ecclesiastics and the nobles of our land; and in virtue of which the former concurred, or rather were compelled to acquiesce, in both our church and our literary establishments being shorn of their patrimony. The effect has been that a revenue, which might have been applied to the exigencies of an increasing population, now unprovided with the means of Christian instruction; or which might have been applied to uphold, in strength and in splendour, those Universities of our land, which both in their endowments and their architecture are fast hastening to degradation and decay—is now wholly secularized, and serves but to augment the expense and the luxury of private families. And in the face of all that contempt and that common-place which the beneficed priesthood of every establishment has to endure, we scruple not to say, that what Knox by his sagacity foresaw, and which he strove in vain to make head against, has been most fearfully realized,—and that the high interests both of religion and of learning suffer at this day, under the effects of that unprincipled, that truly Gothic spoliation.

We are aware of a fashionable political economy in this our day, which, for the sake of leaving untouched the splendour and the luxury of our higher classes, would suffer the public functionaries to

starve; and in opposition to which we at present affirm (for we have no time to argue), that in the progress both of landed and of mercantile wealth, both the officers of religion and the officers of education have been left immeasurably too far behind in the career of an advancing society. On this topic we make common cause with all other public functionaries; and, in despite of the popular outcry against it, we hold, that from the highest judges of the land, to the humblest teacher of a village school, there ought to be one great and general augmentation—it being our first principle, that every public functionary should do his duty well; and our second, that every public functionary should be well paid for the doing of it.

The third topic to which we shall advert, is that in which we hold Knox to have been in an error—though precisely such an error as I think that the book of our now larger experience, in which so many lessons are inscribed since his day, of the wisdom and efficacy of toleration, would have expelled from his mind.

It was an error, however, not confined to the reformers of any particular country; for, in truth, it was shared alike among all the theologians of all the denominations in Christendom. It consisted in the imagination, and it was an imagination quite universal in these days, that Christianity could not flourish, nay that it could not exist, save in the one framework of one certain and defined ecclesiastical constitution; and hence with us, that there could be no light and no efficacy in the ministrations of the gospel, unless they were conducted according

to the forms, and in the strict model and frame-work of Presbytery. And so, in the works of some of the older worthies of the Kirk of Scotland, we read about as often of black Prelacy, as we do of her who was arrayed in scarlet, and is the mother of all abominations. Now, it is surely better, that this extreme and exclusive intolerance is almost wholly done away; and better still it would be, if the two co-ordinate establishments of our island, while they kept by their own respective frame-works, should acknowledge each of the other, that although by a different machinery, there may be the same right and religious principle to animate the movements, and the same high capacities for religious usefulness with both; that if the one, perhaps, have more thoroughly leavened with Christianity the bulk of her population, the other is more signalized by the prowess of her sons, in the high walks of Christian scholarship; that in her Clarkes, and her Butlers, and her Warburtons, and her Hurds, and her Horsleys, and her Paleys, and her Watsons, we behold the divines of a church, which of all others has stood the foremost, and wielded the mightiest polemic arm in the battles of the Faith.

I entreat to be forgiven if I make one allusion more, if not to an error on the part of our old reformers, at least to a peculiarity of theirs, which is not, to say the least of it, so authoritatively enjoined by the book of God's revelation, as to stand exempted from all charge and reckoning on the part of those who, in our own modern day, have at least the benefit of a larger and more luminous book of experience than they had. We utterly

refuse to go along with the ancients of our church in their stern and severe sentiment of Prelacy. And however right they may have been in their sentiment of another denomination, yet still it is, at the very least, a questionable thing, whether they were right in their stern and severe treatment of Popery. After having wrested from Popery its armour of intolerance, was it right to wield that very armour against the enemy that had fallen? After having laid it prostrate by the use alone of a spiritual weapon, was it right or necessary, in order to keep it prostrate, to make use of a carnal one?—thus reversing the characters of that warfare, which Truth had sustained, and with such triumph, against Falsehood; and vilifying the noble cause by an associate so unseemly, as that which the power of the state can make to bear on the now disarmed and subjugated minority. Surely the very strength which won for Protestantism its ascendancy in these realms is competent of itself to preserve it; and if argument and Scripture alone have achieved the victory over falsehood, why not confide to argument and Scripture alone the maintenance of the truth? It is truly instructive to mark, how, on the moment that the forces of the statute-book were enlisted on the side of Protestantism, from that moment Popery, armed with a generous indignancy against its oppressors, put on that moral strength, which persecution always gives to every cause that is at once honoured and sustained by it. O, if the friends of religious liberty had but kept by their own spiritual weapons, when the cause was moving onward in such prosperity, and with such triumph!

But when they threw aside argument, and brandished the ensigns of authority, then it was that truth felt the virtue go out of her; and falsehood, inspired with an energy before unknown, planted the unyielding footstep, and put on the resolute defiance. And now that centuries have rolled on, all the influences, whether of persuasion or of power, have been idly thrown away on the firm, the impracticable countenance of an aggrieved population.

But we gladly hasten away from all these topics, on some of which, indeed, we ought not to have touched, but for the purpose of illustrating the distinction between those cases in which we should defer to the voice of antiquity, and prize its direction as the good old way; and those cases in which the lesson that hath come down to us from antiquity, should be regarded in no other light than as the puerility of a then younger species, the yet weak and unformed judgment of the world's boy-hood. The light of experience which feebly glimmers at the outset of History, brightens onward in its progress. But the same does not hold of the light of revelation, which shone with as pure and as clear a radiance on the patriachs of our church, as it hath since done on any of its succeeding generations. Nay, it is a possible thing, that in the ages which followed the first establishment of Presbytery in Scotland, there may have been deviations from the spirit and simplicity of Scripture; that the pride of intellect, and of human speculation, may have carried it high against that authoritative truth, which hath come down to our world from the upper

sanctuary; that from the exercise of a careless and a corrupt patronage, many of our parishes may have been exposed to the withering influence of a careless and a corrupt clergy; that thus, in the shape of cold and heartless apathy, a moral blight, or mildew, may have descended on our land; and that, what with a meagre theology on the one hand, and an extinct or nearly expiring zeal upon the other, there may have been an utter degeneracy from that golden period, when the truths of the Bible shone full upon many an understanding, and the spirit of the Bible animated many a desirous and devoted heart. It is not that the wisdom of experience was greater then than it is now, but it is that the wisdom of faith and piety was greater then than it is now, that we should so much ameliorate our present age by calling back the genius of the olden time. And did we but revert as before to the strict guidance and authority of Revelation; did we, renouncing our own imaginations, make our submissive appeal to the Law and to the Testimony; did we only suffer the word of God to carry it at all times over the wayward fancies of men, and so recur to the apostolic humility, and the apostolic zeal, of former periods—this, this is what is meant in our text by the good old way.

In conclusion, let me now address you as members of the Church of Scotland, which in principle is essentially Protestant; and which, though like other churches it has its articles and its formularies of doctrine, yet wants no such discipleship as that which is grounded on blind submission to her authority—but only the discipleship of those, who in

the free exercise of their judgment and their conscience, honestly believe her doctrine to be grounded on the authority of the word of God. Both her Catechism and Confession of faith have been given to the public with note and comment, it is true, but with note and comment that consist exclusively of Bible texts; and so, like apples of gold in pictures of silver, they offer a list of dogmata, but of dogmata set, as it were, or embossed in Scripture. The natural depravity of man; his need both of a regeneration and of an atonement; the accomplishment of the one by the efficacy of a divine sacrifice, and of the other by the operation of a sanctifying spirit; the doctrine that a sinner is justified by faith, followed up, most earnestly and incessantly followed up, through the pulpits of our land, by the doctrine that he is judged by works; the righteousness of Christ as the alone foundation of his meritorious claim to heaven, but this followed up by his own personal righteousness as the indispensable preparation for heaven's exercises and heaven's joys; the free offer of pardon even to the chief of sinners, but this followed up by the practical calls of repentance, without which no orthodoxy can save him; the amplitude of the gospel invitations, and, in despite of all that has been so unintelligently said about our gloomy and relentless Calvinism, the wide and unexcepted amnesty that is held forth to every creature under heaven, so as that the message of reconciliation may be made to circulate round the globe, and the overtures of welcome and good will from the mercy seat above, be affectionately urged on all the individuals of all the families

of earth below—these are the main credenda of a church that has oft been reproached for its hard and unfeeling theology—but nevertheless, a theology which, deeply seated as it still is in the affections of our peasantry, hath approved itself by their virtues and their general habits, to be, after all, the fittest basis on which to sustain the moral worth and the moral energies of a nation.

In adhering then to such a church and to such a creed, you adhere to what we have no hesitation in characterising as the good old way of your forefathers—not the less dear, we trust, to many of you, that you have now separated from that interesting land, and perhaps look back through the dim and distant recollection of many years, to the days of your cherished and well-taught boyhood. In this house of wider accommodation, a far larger number of our countrymen than before, can realize the services of a Scottish Sabbath. And, when we think of the constant accessions which are making to this number, and that too, by the yearly influx of exposed and unprotected youth into this vast metropolis, the moral importance of such an erection as the present rises above all computation. We cannot look indeed to those who have recently quitted the parental roof, and now in the open world are in the midst of its snares and its fearful exposures, without regarding it as the most affecting of all spectacles, when any one of them gives up the comparative innocence of his tender years, and thence passes into the hardihood and the knowing depravity of vice. In the whole compass of nature, there is not a wreck more lamentable,

or which presents an object of more distressful contemplation, than does the ruin of youthful modesty. And the flower that withers upon its stalk, and all whose blushing graces have now vanished into the loathsomeness of vilest putrefaction, is but the faint emblem of so sad an overthrow. That indeed is one of the darkest transitions in the history of man, when he exchanges the simplicities of his early home for the riot, and the intemperance, and the daring excesses that are acted in haunts of profligacy—when by the loud laugh of his forerunners in guilt, all his purposes of virtue are overborne; and he is at length tempted, among the urgencies and the contaminations of surrounding example, to cast his principle and his purity away from him. Be assured that, in the wild and lurid gleams of frantic dissipation, there is nought that can compensate for the calm, the beauteous lustre, which some have left behind you in the abode of domestic piety. And therefore, now that you have departed from the hallowed influences of an atmosphere so pure and so kindly, let me entreat you, by all the high interests which belong to you as immortal creatures, that you forget not the solemnity of a father's parting advice, that you forget not the tenderness of a mother's prayers.

One of the likeliest preservatives of conduct through the week, is a powerful religious application to the conscience upon the Sabbath. And we repeat it as matter of high gratulation to our Scottish families, that in a place so capacious as this, the lessons of Christianity are to be ministered according to the forms of our church, and by one

of the most distinguished of her sons—a minister who has ever counted it a small matter to be judged of man's judgment, but who is solemnized by the thought that He who judgeth him is God—a minister who combines with the utmost fearlessness for the creature, the utmost docility and reverence for the Creator,—one whose talents and whose colossal strength of mind could have borne him aloft to the most arduous heights of science, but who now holds it his more becoming, as indeed it is his more dignified part, to give himself wholly to the studies and the pursuits of sacredness,—one who is willing to spend and be spent for the eternity of his people, and who, after having survived the buffetings of a whole world of gainsayers, now sits down amongst you with the well-earned attachment of the thousands who know his worth, and who have been awakened by his ministry. His are not the short-lived triumphs of a mere popular empiricism, but the fairly won distinction of one who possesses the stamina of worth and endurance, being alike gifted with great principle, and with great power. But it is not distinction that he seeks; for intent upon higher objects, we trust the paramount aim of his spirit to be, not his own glory, but the glory of the master whom he serves; and that actuated by motives which the world can neither understand nor sympathise with, he has received of that grace from above, which is given only to the humble, and the want of which would stamp an utter impotency on the ablest and most splendid ministrations. If thus upholden, he has nothing to fear. Already have the outrages of a rude and licentious press broken

their strength upon him, and are dissipated. And now that the fume, and the turbulence, and the uproar, of this temporary warfare have been all cleared away, does he stand forth with a moral dignity on his part, and a warranted confidence upon yours, which, under God, are the best guarantees for the success of his future labours.

May the spirit of all grace abundantly strengthen and uphold him in the arduous office to which he has been called. May living water from the sanctuary above descend on the ministrations of the word here below; and both fertilizing the soil of your hearts, and fructifying the good seed which is deposited there, may you be made to abound in all the fruits of righteousness. May this House in future years be the scene of many sound and scriptural conversions; and never, till in the course of generations its walls have mouldered into decay, and its minarets have fallen, never may it cease either in our own day, or in the days of our children's children, to be a gate to Heaven, a place of busy and successful preparation for Heaven's exercises, and Heaven's joys.

THE EFFECT OF MAN'S WRATH IN THE AGITATION OF RELIGIOUS CONTROVERSIES:

A

SERMON,

PREACHED AT THE OPENING

OF

THE NEW PRESBYTERIAN CHAPEL IN BELFAST,

ON

SABBATH, SEPTEMBER 23, 1827.

PREFACE.

THE following Sermon was written and preached three years ago, in behalf of the Catholic Schools in Glasgow; and, of course, without any anticipation of the more recent occasion on which it was preached at Belfast, and in consequence of which its publication has been called for.

The only material variation from its original state occurs in pages 180, &c., where allusion is made to the controversy which respects the person and dignity of the Saviour.

I was no stranger to the fact, that this great topic had been zealously occupying the public mind in the North of Ireland; and I may have been led by this very circumstance to seize upon it. For, first, if there be entire soundness in the general principle of the discourse on the subject of religious differences, it must admit of being applied to any religious difference whatever. And, secondly, though actuated by no other wish than that of making full and lucid conveyance of the principle into the minds of my hearers, it was natural to select that instance, which, as being most familiar to them at the time, was best fitted to serve the purpose of vivid and convincing illustration.

It could not fail to be gratifying, that, in the applications made to me for the Sermon being printed, so many respectable members of the Synod of Ulster, as well as a number of the highest and most influential people in the town and neighbourhood of Belfast, made this call, on the ground that the publication was suited to the state of parties, and might subserve the cause of peace and charity. In justice, however, both to myself and to others, I think it proper to state, that, while preparing this imperfect composition, I only felt myself to be acting as an expositor of general truth; and that, placed as I was at a distance from the scene, and unacquainted with the detail of those theological contentions which have lately taken place, I should have deemed it both presumptuous and indecorous to have set myself forth in the capacity of a judge, and far more in that of a censor, either on the proceedings of public bodies, in regard to this question, or on the conduct of individuals.

SERMON V.

THE EFFECT OF MAN'S WRATH IN THE AGITATION OF RELIGIOUS CONTROVERSIES.

"The wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God."—JAMES i. 20.

WITHOUT attempting, what we should feel to be impossible within the limits of one discourse, to expound the principle of our text in all its generality, we shall satisfy ourselves with adverting to but one or two special applications of it. We shall first consider the effect of man's wrath when interposed between the call of the gospel, and the minds of those to whom the gospel is addressed—and, secondly, consider the effect of man's wrath when interposed between a right and a wrong denomination of Christianity.

I. You are all aware of there being much wrathful controversy on the part of men relative to the gospel of Jesus Christ, wherein the righteousness of God is said, by the apostle, to be revealed from faith to faith. To understand the way in which this great message from heaven to earth may be darkened, and altogether transformed out of its native character, by the conflict and controversy of its interpreters, we ask you to conceive the effect, if a message of most free and unqualified kindness,

from some earthly superior, were just to be handled in the same way. We may imagine that in his bosom, there is nought but the utmost good-will to us, in all its truth, and in all its tenderness; and that he sends forth the expression of it in writing, on purpose that we may read and may rejoice; and that if we but perused this precious document with the simplicity of children, we could not fail to be gladdened by the assurances of a love which shone most directly and most unequivocally from all its pages. But instead of this, we may further imagine, that between our minds and all the grace and goodness of this communication, there should spring up a whole army of expounders—and that in the pride, and the heat, and the bitterness of argument, they fell out among themselves—and that all were vastly too much engrossed, each with his own special understanding about the terms of the message, ever to meet together in harmony, and in mutual felicitation, on the broad and unquestionable truths of it. Is there no danger, we ask, amid the acerbities of such a thickening warfare, that men should lose sight of the mildness and the mercy that lay in that embassy of peace by which it had been stirred? Is it not a possible thing, that many an humble spirit, whom the soft and the kind affection of the original message might else have wakened into confidence, shall feel itself disturbed and bewildered in the fierce and the fiery agitations of such an atmosphere as this? When we hear from one quarter, that such is the import of the message, and that we shall forfeit all the beneficence which it proffers, unless we so understand it,—when, in

vehement resistance to this, we hear of another import, and even denounced upon them who refuse it, the wrath of Him whose good-will is the whole burden of the now disputed communication,—when moreover a third, and a different interpretation, is listed against each of the two former, and supported with acrimony, and backed by the same menaces of a displeasure on the part of that universal friend, who had set himself forth in the benignest attitude, and lifted the widely-sounding call of reconciliation, —Certain it is, that when the mind of an inquirer is involved among these, it is occupied with topics of another description, and another character altogether, from that of the calm and the kind benevolence which resides at the fountain-head, and which would have radiated from thence on the hearts of a delighted people, were it not for the intervening turbulence that serves to hide, or at least to darken it. It is thus that, by the angry and the lowering passions of these middle men, an obscuration might be shed on all the goodness and the grace which sit on the brow of their superior; and that when stunned in the uproar of their sore controversy with the challenge, and the recrimination, and the boisterous assertion of victory, and all the other clamours of heated partizanship—that these might altogether drown the soft utterance of that clemency whereof they are the interpreters, and cause the gentler sounds that issue from some high seat of munificence and mercy to be altogether unheard.

Now, it is altogether worthy of our consideration, whether such might not be the effect of those

manifold controversies that have risen, in regard to the terms and the truths of that gospel message which has come down from the sanctuary above to the men of our lower world. The love for mankind which resides in the bosom of the unseen and eternal God, is there most distinctly asserted; and there is also most full and frequent declaration of His willingness to receive us; and in every possible way of entreaty, and protestation, and kind encouragement, does He manifest the forth-puttings of His longing affection towards us; and, rather than not reclaim us hapless wanderers to that blessedness with Himself, from which we had so widely departed, He lavished all the resources both of His omnipotence and of His wisdom, on a scheme of reconciliation, by which even the guiltiest of offenders might draw nigh; and He sent the Son of His everlasting regards from heaven to earth, who had to surrender all His glories, and to suffer all the vengeance of an outraged law, ere He could move away the obstructions which stood between sinners and the mercy-seat; and, after having thus laboriously framed a pathway of access to that throne of righteousness, which is now turned into a throne of grace, did he lift up a voice of invitation to walk in it—a voice so diffusive, that it may go abroad over all, and yet so pointed, that it singles out and specializes each of the human family; and now, with all the soul and sincerity of a Father's earnestness, does He ask, in the hearing of that world He has done so much to save, "What more could I have done for my vineyard that I have not done for it?" Such is the character of that direct, that

primary demonstration, which has been made to us from heaven. Such the felt love for our species which is honestly and genuinely there; and well, we repeat, is it worthy of our full consideration, whether, across the dark, the troubled medium of human controversy, the sight of it is not tarnished to the eye—the sound of it, thus mingled with notes of harshest discord, is not lost upon the ear. In one place, the gospel is called the ministration of righteousness—in another, the gift which it offers, is called the gift of righteousness; and they are said to possess or to receive the righteousness of God, who have laid their confident hold upon that offer. But while the direct view of a benignant and a beseeching God, as He urges the offer upon their acceptance, is so well fitted to charm them into confidence, is there nothing, we ask, in the din of this posterior and subordinate controversy, that is fitted to disturb it? Surely the noise that arises from the wars and the wranglings of earth, falls differently upon the hearing to that sweetest music which descended from the canopy that is over our heads, and which accompanied the declaration of good-will to us in heaven. And so, altogether, that theology which shines immediate from his Bible on the heart of the unlettered peasant, may come with altered expression and effect on the mind of the scholastic, after it has been transmuted into the theology of the portly and polemic folio. The Sun of Righteousness may shed a mild and beauteous lustre upon the one, which, to the eye of the other, is obscured in the turbulence of rolling vapours, in the lurid clouds of an angry and un-

settled sky. It is precisely thus, we fear, that the dogmatism on the one hand, and the defiance upon the other, which are associated with the conflicts and the championship of our profession, may have dimmed, to the vision of those who are below, the face of the benign and the beautiful sanctuary above; and verily there is room for the question, whether, in this way too, we have not one exemplification of the text, that "the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God."

When God beseeches us to be reconciled to Him in Christ Jesus, there is placed before the mind one object of contemplation. When man steps forward, and, in the pride or intolerance of orthodoxy, denounces the fury of an incensed God on all who put not faith in the merits and the mediation of His Son, there is placed before the mind another and a distinct object of contemplation. And just in proportion to the varieties of dogmatism or debate, will the mind shift and fluctuate from one contemplation to another. Certain it is, that it must feel a different sort of affection, when directly engaged with the love of God in heaven, from what it does when tost and alternated among the wrathful elements of human controversy upon earth. It then breathes in another atmosphere; and the whole sense and savour of the encompassing medium feel differently from before. And still it comes to the same important, but unhappy result, as if the music of the spheres had been drowned in the rude and resentful outcry of noises from beneath, and the ear had failed to catch the utterance of Heaven's inspiration, because lost and overborne amid sounds

of earthliness. It is thus that the native character of Heaven's embassy may at length be shrouded in subtle, but most effectual disguise, from the souls of men; and the whole spirit and design of its munificent Sovereign be wholly misconceived by His sinful, yet much-loved children. We interpret the Deity by the hard and imperious scowl which sits on the countenance of angry theologians; and in the strife and clamour of their fierce animosities, we forget the aspect of Him who is upon the throne, the bland and benignant aspect of that God who waiteth to be gracious.

It is thus that men of highest respect in the Christian world have done grievous injury to the cause. Whether, we ask, would Calvin have found readier acceptance for his own favourite doctrine of justification by the righteousness of Christ, (that only righteousness which God will accept in plea of our meritorious claim to the kingdom of heaven, and therefore called the righteousness of God,)—whether was it likelier that he should have gained the consent of men's minds to this method of salvation, by declaring it in the spirit of gentleness, and with the accents of entreaty, or by denouncing it in the spirit of an incensed polemic, and with that aspect which sits on his pages of severe and relentless dogmatism? Would it not have strengthened his cause, had he, in propounding the message of reconciliation to his fellows upon earth, caught more upon his heart of the benignity which prompted the sending of that message from heaven?—and had the eye, the voice, the manner of this able expounder of the counsels of God, represented more

of the kindness which presided over these counsels, of the compassion felt in the upper sanctuary, and which there originated the forth-going of the Saviour on our guilty world? Certain it is, that there is nought to conciliate the spirits of men to the doctrine of Calvin, all true, and all momentous as it is, in that wrath which glares upon us so repeatedly from the dark and angry passages of his argument. That violence and vituperation, by which his Institutes are so frequently deformed, never do occur, we venture to affirm, but with an adverse influence on the minds of his readers, in reference to the truth which he espouses. In other words, that truth which, when couched in the language, and accompanied with the calls of affection, finds such welcome into the hearts of men, hath brought upon its propounders the reaction of stout indignant hostility, and just because of the stern intolerance wherewith it has been proposed by them. This difference, in point of effect, between the meek and the magisterial style of instruction, makes it of the utmost practical importance, that neither the pride nor the passions of men should mingle in the discussion, when labouring either with or against each other in the common pursuit of truth. For much has it prejudiced the cause of truth in the world, that it has so oft been urged and insisted on with that wrath of man, which, most assuredly, worketh not the righteousness of God.

And, though not strictly under our present head of discourse, there is one observation more which we feel it of importance to make, ere we pass on to the next division of our subject. Apart from

the transforming effect of human wrath to give another hue, as it were, to the complexion of the Godhead, and another expression than that of its own native kindness, to the message which has proceeded from Him, there is a distinct operation in the mind of an inquirer after religious truth, which is altogether worthy of being adverted to. When the controversialist makes an angry demand upon us for our belief in some one of his positions, why, that position may be the offered and the gratuitous mercy of God in heaven, and yet the whole charm of such a proposal may be dissipated, just through that tone and temper of intolerance in which it is expounded to us upon earth. When entertained in the shape of a direct announcement from the Father of mercies Himself it comes with a wholly different impression upon the heart from what it does when entertained in the shape of an article that has been fashioned by a system-builder, and then fulminated against us by the hand of human combatants. All that hope and that happiness which might else have beamed from the doctrine of grace, and that instantly, upon the soul, may, as it were, be neutralized by the passionate and peremptory style of menace, wherewith faith in that doctrine is insisted upon. This we have already considered; yet it must not be overlooked, that even for the hope and the happiness, faith is indispensable—that ere we can rejoice in any truth, or take the salutary impression of it upon our hearts, the truth must be believed in; and, indeed, the Bible itself accompanies its statements of doctrine with the exaction of our faith in them. Without

this faith in their reality, we can have no benefit from the objects of revelation. Faith is the avenue through which they come into contact with the inner man, and by which alone they can obtain an influence over the affections. It is not to be wondered at, then, that possessing, as it does, such vital importance, they who are in earnest after their salvation, should set such extreme value on the acquisition of faith. It is to them the pearl of great price. If, under the economy of the Law, men staked their eternity upon their works—under the economy of the Gospel, they stake their eternity upon their faith. The longings and the labourings of their hearts are now as much after the right belief, as formerly they were after the right obedience. And if while, "Do this and live," was the reigning principle of Heaven's administration, the natural anxiety for every expectant of Heaven, was to do properly —now that the reigning principle is, "Believe and be saved," it is as just as natural that it should be his intense and his unceasing anxiety to believe properly.

Now, observe the misdirection of which he is consequently in danger. It is apt to turn away his attention from the object of faith, to the act of faith. If faith be any where, it is in the mind, which is its proper habitation, its place of occupancy and settlement; and when he wants to ascertain the reality of his faith, it is indeed most natural that he should go in quest of the precious article through the secrecies of this dwelling-place. In other words, he looks inwardly, instead of outwardly. In place of gazing abroad among the

objects of Revelation, and gathering from thence of that direct radiance which they might have streamed upon his soul, he seeks for the reflection of these objects within the soul itself; and, while so employed, his inverted eye shuts out all the illumination that is above him and around him. It is not by looking inwardly upon the eye's own retina, but by looking openly and outwardly on the panorama of external nature, that we see the glories of the summer landscape. It is not by casting a downward regard on the tablet of vision, but by casting an upward regard on the starry firmament, that the wonders of the midnight sky become manifest to the beholder. And it is not, let it ever be remembered, it is not by a painful, by a probing scrutiny amongst the mysteries or the metaphysics of the inner man, that we admit the light of heaven into the soul. The peace and the joy of a believer do not spring from the traces which he finds to be within him. They emanate and they descend upon his heart, from the truths which are suspended over him. The work of faith consists not in looking to himself, but in looking to the reconciled countenance of God. He fetches its gladdening assurances, not from any light that has been struck out among the arcana of his own spirit, but from that great fountain of light, the Sun of Righteousness—the spiritual luminary which has arisen to the view of a sinful world, that every one who looketh may be saved. If you invert this order, if you look into yourself, without looking unto Jesus, then you suspend the exercise of faith at the very time that you are trying to make sure of its exis-

tence. You look the wrong way; and if by the former influence, even that of man's wrath interposed between you and God's kindness, you were disturbed out of confidence and of comfort—by the present influence you are at least distracted away from them, even because the eye of the mind, when inverted upon itself, is averted from the proper object of confidence.

Let us never cease then the presentation of this object before you; and, when visited by fears, whether in looking to one's own heart, and finding nought but darkness and destitution there; or on looking to the countenance of our fellow men, and beholding the menace and intolerance which are depicted there; let all be overborne by a direct view of the kindness of God. Let us lift ourselves above these turbid elements of earth, and be firmly and erectly confident of benevolence in Heaven. The good-will that is there towards the children of men, the joy that is felt there over every sinner who repenteth, the mild radiance there of the upper sanctuary, and the grace and the benignity which invest its glorious mercy-seat—these are the things which be above—these the stable realities of that place where God sitteth on His throne, and where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God. Yonder is the region of light and of undoubted love; and, whatever the mists or the obscurations may be of this lower world, there is welcome, free, generous, unbounded welcome to one and all in the courts of the Eternal. The sun of our firmament is still as gorgeously seated in fields of ethereal beauty and radiance as ever, when veiled from the sight of

mortals by the lowering sky that is underneath. And so of the shrouded character of the Godhead, who, all placid and serene in the midst of elevation, is often mantled from human eye by the turbulence and the terror of those clouds which gather on the face of our spiritual hemisphere. The unchangeableness of that Deity, whose compassions fail not—the constituted Mediator, who is the same to-day, and yesterday, and for ever—the promises, which are yea and amen in Christ Jesus our Lord—the word of revelation, whereof it has been said, that heaven and earth shall pass away ere it can pass away—These are the enduring, the unextinguishable lights in the palace of our mild and munificent Sovereign, and in which all of us are called upon to rejoice. There may be no comfort to draw up from the darkling recesses of our own spirits; but surely it may descend upon us in floods of brightness and beauty from a canopy so glorious. There may be nought to gladden, in the wrathful and the warring controversies of the men who stand betwixt us and heaven; but in heaven itself there are notes of sweeter and kinder melody, and well may we assure ourselves in the gratulation that is awakened there over every sinner who turns unto God.

We are aware, all the time, that the truth, as it is in Jesus, must be sustained by argument—that this is one of the offices of the church militant upon earth, whose part it is to silence gainsayers; and not only to contend, but to contend earnestly, for the faith which was delivered unto the saints. For this service, we stand deeply indebted to the lore and the laborious authorship of other days—to the

prowess of those dauntless theologians, those gigantic men of war, who, skilled alike in the mysteries of the Bible, and in the mysteries of our common nature, have, in the vast and the venerable productions which they left behind them, reared such bulwarks around the system of a sound and a settled orthodoxy, as have never yet been stormed. Yet the most prominent article of that system—that which Luther denominated the test of a standing or a falling church—even the doctrine of imputed righteousness by faith—although argument be the weapon by which to defend it against the inroad of adversaries, it is not the weapon of penetration or of power by which to force a way for its saving reception into the heart of a believer. It is not in the clangour of arms, or in the shouts of victory, or in the heat and hurry even of most successful gladiatorship—it is not thus that this overture of peace and pardon from heaven falls with efficacy upon the sinner's ear. It is not so much in the act of intellectually proving the truth of the doctrine, as in the act of proceeding upon its truth, when we affectionately urge the sinner to make it the stepping-stone of his return unto God—it is then most generally that it becomes manifest unto his conscience, and that he receives in love that which in the spirit of love and kindness has been offered to him. In a word, it is when the bearer of this message from God to man, urges it upon his fellow-sinners in the very spirit which first prompted that message from the upper sanctuary—it is when he truly represents, not alone the contents of Heaven's overtures, but also that heavenly kindness by which

they were suggested—it is when he entreats rather than when he denounces, and when that compassion, which is in the heart of the Godhead, actuates his own—it is when standing in the character of an ambassador from Him who so loved the world, he accompanies the delivery of his message with the looks and the language of his own manifest tenderness—it is then that the preacher of salvation is upon his best vantage-ground of command over the hearts of a willing people; and when he finds that charity, and prayer, and moral earnestness have done what neither lordly intolerance nor even lordly argument could have done, it is then that he rejoices in the beautiful experience, that it is something else than the wrath of man which is the instrument of working the righteousness of God.

The apostle says, "covet earnestly the best gifts," and then adds, "but yet I show you a more excellent way"—even the way of charity. We are also bidden "to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered unto the saints." But notwithstanding, there may be a still more excellent and effectual way, even to "speak the truth in love." It is thus that the gospel, sometimes in one passage, blends firmness of principle with the gentleness of kind affection, towards those who are its adversaries. "Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong. Let all your things be done with charity." "Do all things without murmurings and disputings, that ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God without rebuke in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world, holding forth the

word of life." "Now we exhort you brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feeble-minded; support the weak, be patient towards all men. See that none render evil for evil unto any man; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves and to all men." The vehemence of passion is one thing. The vehemence of sentiment is another. There is a hatefulness in the first. There is a certain nobleness to be liked and admired in the second. The former vents itself in malice against the heretic. The latter urges and assails the heresy. The strength of irritation is wholly different from the strength of conviction; and a deep sensation of the importance of truth, is wholly different from a sensitive dislike towards him who resists or disowns it. The Bible makes the discrimination between these two; and it tells us to shun the one, and to cherish the other to the uttermost. Under its guidance, we shall know both how to maintain an unyielding front of resistance to the error, and yet to have compassion and courtesy for him who is the victim of it. It is a triumph to conquer by the power of argument—but it is a greater triumph to conciliate and convert by the power of charity.

II. But this brings me to the second head of discourse, under which I shall now, very shortly, consider the effect of man's wrath, when interposed between a right and a wrong denomination of Christianity.

It can require no very deep insight into our nature to perceive, that when there is proud or angry intolerance on the side of truth, it must call

forth the reaction of a sullen and determined obstinacy on the side of error. Men will submit to be reasoned out of an opinion, and more especially when treated with respect and kindness. But they will not submit to be cavalierly driven out of it. There is a revolt in the human spirit against contempt and contumely, insomuch that the soundest cause is sure to suffer from the help of such auxiliaries. When passion is enlisted on one side of a controversy, then provocation is awakened on the other side,—and the parties erecting themselves into stouter and loftier attitude than before, stand to each other in respective positions which are mutually impregnable. It is this infusion of temper by which the force even of mightiest argument is paralyzed. It is when disdain meets with defiance, when exasperating charges meet with indignant recriminations, when the shouts of exulting victory may sting the bosom of adversaries with the humiliations, but never draw from their lips the acknowledgments of defeat,—it is when the war of words is animated with feelings such as these, that Truth, whose still small voice is all-powerful, falls from her omnipotence and her glory; and Falsehood, resolute in the midst of such stormy agitations, is only riveted thereby more firmly upon her basis. To the perversity of human error, there is now superadded the still more hopeless perversity of human wilfulness—and on looking at the whole resulting amount from these fulminations of heated partisanship, one cannot fail to acknowledge, that indeed the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.

Nevertheless, it is the part of man, both to adopt and to advocate the truth, lifting his zealous testimony in its favour. Yet there is surely a way of doing this in the spirit of charity; and while strenuous, while even uncompromising in the argument, it is possible surely to observe all the amenities of gentleness and good-will, in these battles of the faith. For example, it is not wrong to feel either the strength or the importance of our cause, when we plead the Godhead of the Saviour; when, in affirming this to be an article of our creed, we simply repeat a statement of Scripture, as distinct and absolute as it is in the power of vocables to make it; even that "the Word was God;" when, after that a sound erudition hath pronounced the integrity of this one passage, we should deem it a waste and a perversion of criticism, to suspend our belief, till we had adjusted all the merits of all the controversies on other and more ambiguous passages; when after being satisfied that the Bible is indeed the record of an authentic communication from Heaven to earth, we put faith in this its clearest utterance, than which it is not within the compass of human language to frame a more unequivocal, or a more definite; when contrasting the ignorance of a creature so beset and limited as man, with the amplitude of that infinite and everlasting light, from the confines of which the message of revelation hath broke upon our world, we count it our becoming attitude to listen to all its announcements even as with the docility of little children; when, more especially, in profoundest darkness as we are, about the nature or constitution of the Deity, who, throned

in the mystery of His unfathomable essence, pervades all space, and without beginning or without end, unites in His wondrous Being the extremes of eternity, we hold that one information of Himself, and from His own authoritative voice, should rebuke and bid away all human imaginations; when, placed, as we are, in but a corner of that immensity which He hath peopled with innumerable worlds, with nought to instruct us but the experience of our little day, and nought to guide our way to that region of invisibles which is all His own—we, surrendering each fond and favourite preconception of ours, defer to the teaching of Him, who is Himself the fountain-head of existence, and whose eye reaches to the furthest outskirts of the universe that He has formed. And should He but tell of Him who was made flesh, that He was in the beginning with God, and that He was God, surely on a theme so vastly above us and beyond us, it is for us to regulate our belief by the very letter of this communication; and on the basis of such an evidence as this, to honour the Son even as we honour the Father, is the soundest philosophy, as well as the soundest faith.

Yet with all these reasons for holding ourselves to be intellectually right upon this question, there is not one reason why the wrath of man should be permitted to mingle in the controversy. This, whenever it is admitted, operates not as an ingredient of strength, but as an ingredient of weakness. Let Truth be shrined in argument—for this is its appropriate glory. And it is a sore disparagement inflicted upon it by the hand of vindictive theologians,

when, instead of this, it is shrined in anathema, or brandished as a weapon of dread and of destruction over the heads of all who are compelled to do it homage. The terrible denunciations of Athanasius have not helped—they have injured the cause. The Godhead of Christ is not thus set forth in the New Testament. It is nowhere proposed in the shape of a mere dictatorial article, or as a naked dogma, for the understanding alone; and at one place it is introduced as an episode for the enforcement of a moral virtue. In this famous passage, the practical lesson occupies the station of principal, as the main or capital figure of the piece; and the doctrine on which so many would effervesce all their zeal, even to exhaustion, stands to it but in the relation of a subsidiary. The lesson is, "Let nothing be done through strife or vain-glory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others." And the doctrine, (here noticed by the Apostle, not to the end that he may rectify the opinion of his disciples, but primarily and obviously, to the end that he may rectify their conduct) the doctrine for the enforcement of the lesson is, "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." In these verses there is a collateral lesson for our faith; but

the chief, the direct lesson, is a lesson of charity, which is greater than faith. And would the heart of Trinitarian be but as obediently schooled as his head, by this passage—would Orthodoxy, instead of the strife and the vain-glory which have given her so revolting an aspect, both of pride and sternness, but put on her bowels of mercy, and to her truth add tenderness—would the champions of a Saviour's dignity but learn of His meekness and lowliness, and, while they assert Him to be God manifest in the flesh, meet the perversity of gainsayers in the very spirit of gentleness that He did, —This were the way by which the Church militant might be borne onwardly and upwardly to the station of the Church triumphant in the world. This is the way in which, by the mechanism of our moral nature, to obtain ascendancy over the hearts of men. Truth will be indebted for her best victories, not to the overthrow of Heresy, discomfited on the field of argumemt, but to the surrender of Heresy, disarmed of that in which her strength and her stability lie,—of her passionate, because provoked, wilfulness. Charity will do what reason cannot do. It will take that which letteth out of the way—even that wrath of man, which worketh neither the truth nor the righteousness of God.

But our time does not permit of any further illustration—else we might have shown at greater length, how, by the oversight of this great principle, the cause both of truth and of righteousness has been impeded in the world. Theologians have forgotten it in their controversies. Statesmen have forgotten it in their laws. Never was there a

greater blunder in legislation, than that by which the forces of the statute-book have been enlisted on the side of truth; and error, as was quite natural, instead of being subdued, has been thereby settled down into tenfold obstinacy. The glories of martyrdom have been transferred from the right to the wrong side of the question; and superstition, which, in a land of perfect light and perfect liberty, would hide her head as ashamed, gathers a title to respect, and stands forth in a character of moral heroism, because of the injustice which has been brought to bear upon her. She ought, in all wisdom, to have been left to her own natural decay—or, at least, reason and kindness are the only engines which should have been made to play upon her strong-holds. But with such an auxiliary, as the mere authority of terror upon the one side, and such a resistance as that of a generous and high-minded indignation upon the other—there have arisen the elements of an interminable warfare. And not till truth, relieved of so unseemly an associate, be confined to the use of her proper weapons, will she be reinstated on her proper vantage-ground. It is not in the fermentation of human passions and human politics, that the lessons of heaven can be with efficacy taught—and ere these lessons shall go abroad in triumph over the length and breadth of the land, we must recall the impolicy by which we have turned a whole people into a nation of outcasts. To exclude is surely not the way to assimilate. It is by pervading, instead of separating into an unbroken mass, and then placing it off at a distance from us—it is by extensively mingling with the men of an-

other denomination, in all the walks of civil and political business—it is then, that the occasions of converse and of courtesy will be indefinitely multiplied—and then will it be found, that it is by an influence altogether opposite to the wrath of man, that we are enabled to work the righteousness of God.

But let us not make entrance on a field, to the verge of which we have now been conducted by the light of a principle that is abundantly capable of shedding most beautiful, as well as most beneficent illustration over the whole of it. Let us rather conclude with the application of our text, not to the affairs of an empire, or the affairs of a church, but rather to the affairs of a single congregation. Let us recur, though but for one moment, ere we shall have brought our address to its close, to that spirit of kindness and good-will, which prompted the original formation of the gospel message in the upper sanctuary, as being indeed the very spirit by which the expounder of that message ought to be actuated. He may have at times to engage in conflict with the infidels or the heretics around him. Nevertheless, let him be assured, that it is by other armour than that which is wielded on the field of controversy—by an influence more powerful still, than even that of overbearing argument, by the moral and affectionate earnestness of a heart that breathes the very charity and tenderness of heaven upon his audience,—it is thus that ministerial work is done most prosperously—the work of winning souls, of turning sons and daughters unto righteousness.

It is not so easy as may be thought, to dislodge the fears, or to win the confidence of nature in him who is nature's God. There is a certain overhanging sense of guilt, which forms the main ingredient of this alienation. It is this which darkens, to the eye of our world, the face of Heaven's Lawgiver; and brings such a burden of dread and of distrust on the spirit of man, that he feels nothing to invite, but to repel and overawe, in the thought of Heaven's high sacredness. It is thus that the aspect of the Divinity is mantled and overshaded to the human imagination; and instead of reading there the signals of welcome and good-will, we figure to ourselves a God dwelling in some awful and august sanctuary, or seated on a throne whence the fire of jealousy goeth forth to burn up and to destroy. It is sin which has laid this cold, this heavy obstruction, on the hearts of our outcast species. There is a strong, though secret, apprehension of displeasure in the countenance of Him who is above, which haunts us continually, and gives us the hourly, the habitual, feeling of outcasts. Man recoils to a distance from God, and regards God as placed at an inaccessible distance from him. There is between them a gulph of separation, across which man looks with disquietude and dismay, as he would to some spectral or portentous image shrouded in mystery, and all the more tremendous that he is invisible and unknown. The greatest moral revolution which the spirit of man undergoes, is when these clouds which overhang the hemisphere of his spiritual vision are all cleared away, and the Godhead shines upon him with a new and an opposite manifestation—when

simply, because now seeing the Deity under an aspect of graciousness, he, instead of trembling before Him as an enemy, can securely trust in Him as a friend, and can rejoice in that Being of whom he has been made to know and to believe that He rejoices over him, to bless him and to do him good.

Now, it is by faith in the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and by it alone, that this great revolution is achieved. It is through the open door of His mediatorship, that the sinner draws nigh, and beholds God as a reconciled Father. It is because of that blood of atonement, wherewith the mercy-seat on high is sprinkled, that he is made to hear the voice of welcome and of good-will which issues therefrom. He now beholds no severity in the aspect of the Lawgiver; and yet, through the work of Him by whom the law was magnified, he there beholds the harmony of all the attributes. Such is the exquisite skilfulness of the economy under which we sit, that the truth, and the justice, and the holiness, which out of Christ were leagued against us for destruction—now that these have emerged, in vindicated lustre, from that hour of darkness, when the Saviour bowed down his head unto the sacrifice, they are the guarantees of pardon and acceptance to all who lay hold of this great salvation. It was in love to man that this wondrous dispensation was framed. It was kindness, honest, heartfelt, compassionate kindness, that formed the moving principle of the embassy from heaven to our world. We protest, by the meekness and the gentleness of Christ, by the tears of Him who wept at Lazarus' tomb, and over the approaching ruin of Jerusalem,

by every word of blessing that He uttered, and by every footstep of this wondrous visitor over the surface of a land on which he went about doing good continually,—we protest in the name of all these unequivocal demonstrations, that they do Him an injustice who propound this message in any other way than as a message of friendship to our species. He came not to condemn, but to save; not to destroy, but to keep alive. And he is the fittest bearer, he the best interpreter, of these overtures from above, who urges them upon men, not with wrath, and clamour, and controversial bitterness, but in the very spirit of that wisdom from above, which is gentle, and easy to be entreated, and full of mercy.

In this way the moral power of the truth is superadded to its argumentative power. The kind affection of the speaker becomes an element of weight and influence in the demonstration which falls from him. He does more than barely utter the realities of the gospel—he pictures them forth in the persuasiveness of his own accents, in the looks as well as the language of his own manifested tenderness. He is the right person for standing between a people and heaven—seeing that Heaven's love to men is expressed visibly in his own countenance, audibly in the earnestness of his own voice. With a heart glowing in charity to his hearers, he is the fit representative, the best expounder, of that embassy, which has come from the dwelling-place of the Eternal on an errand of charity to our world. And fraught as he is with the tidings of mercy, it is not more when he urges the truth, than when he

affectingly sets forth the tenderness of these tidings, that he charms the acquiescence of men, and his message is felt to be "worthy of all acceptation."

Before I leave you, I should like, even though at the end of our discourse, and by an informal resumption of its first topic, to possess the heart of each who now hears me with the distinct assurance of God's proffered good-will to him, of His free and full pardon stretched out for the acceptance of him. If heretofore you have been in the habit of contemplating the gospel as at a sort of speculative distance, and in its generality, I want you now to feel the force of its pointed, its personal application, and to understand it as a message addressed specifically to you. The message has been so framed, and couched in phraseology of such peculiar import, that it knocks for entrance at every heart, and is laid down for acceptance at every door. It is true, that you are not named and surnamed in the Bible; but the term "whosoever," associated, as it frequently is, with the offer of its blessings, points that offer to each and to all of you. "Whosoever will, let him drink of the waters of life freely." It is very true that this written communication has not been handed to you, like the letter of a distant acquaintance, with the address of your designation and dwelling-place inscribed upon it. But the term "all," as good as specializes the address to each, and each has a full warrant to proceed upon the call, "Look unto me, all ye ends of the earth, and be saved;" or, "Come unto me, all ye who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." It is furthermore true, that Christ

has not appeared in person at any of your assemblies, and, singling out this one individual, and that other, has bid him step forward with an application for pardon, on the assurance that he would receive it;—but the term "every" singles out each; and He has left behind Him the precious, the unexcepted declaration, that "every one who asketh receiveth," that "every one who seeketh findeth." And lastly, it is true that He disperses no special messengers of His grace to special individuals; but the term "any," though occupying but its own little room in a single text, has a force equally dispersive with as many messengers sent to the world as there are men upon its surface. "If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink." These are the words which, unlike the wheels of Ezekiel's vision, turn every way, carrying the message of salvation diffusively abroad among all, and pointing it distinctively to each of the human family. Their scope is wide as the species, and their application is to every individual thereof. And what I want each individual present to understand, is, that God in the gospel beseeches him to be reconciled —God is saying unto him, "Turn thou, turn thou, why wilt thou die?"

There are certain generic words attached at times to the overtures of the gospel, which have the same twofold power of spreading abroad these overtures generally among all, yet of pointing them singly at each of the human family. The "world," for example, is a word of this import; and Jesus Christ is declared to be a propitiation for the sins of the whole world. After this, man, though an

inhabitant of the world, and, as such, fairly within the scope of this communication, may continue to forbid himself, but most assuredly God has not forbidden him. The term "sinner" is another example, as being comprehensive of a genus, whereof each individual may appropriate the benefits that are said in Scripture to be intended for the whole. "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save *sinners*." Still it is possible, as before, that many a sinner may not hold this saying to be worthy, or, at least, may not make it the subject of his acceptation. His demand perhaps is, that, ere he can have a warrantable confidence in this saying for himself, he must be specially, and by name, included in it; whereas the truth is, that to warrant his distrust, his want of confidence after such a saying, he should be specially, and by name, excluded from it. After an utterance like this, instead of needing, as a sufficient reason of dependence, to be made the subject of a particular invitation, he would really need, as a sufficient reason of despondency, to be made the subject of a particular exception. Is not the characteristic term, "sinner," sufficiently descriptive of him? as much so, indeed, as if he had been named and surnamed in Scripture. Does it not mark him as an object for all those announcements which bear on sinners, as such, or sinners generally? The truth is, if we but understood the terms of this great act of amnesty, and made the legitimate application of them, we should perceive that, to whomsoever the word of salvation has come, to him the offer of salvation

has been made—that he is really as welcome to all the blessings of the New Testament, as if he had been the only creature in the universe who stood in need of them; as if he had been the only sinner of all the myriads of beings whom God hath formed; and as if to reclaim him, and to prevent the moral harmony of creation from being stained or interrupted by even so much as one solitary exception, for him alone the costly apparatus of redemption had been reared, and Christ had died, that God might be to him individually both a just God and a Saviour.

A

SERMON,

PREACHED IN

ST. GEORGE'S CHURCH, EDINBURGH,

ON

SABBATH, FEBRUARY 20, 1831,

ON

OCCASION OF THE DEATH

OF THE

REV. DR. ANDREW THOMSON.

SERMON VI.

ON THE DEATH OF THE REV. DR. ANDREW THOMSON.

"He being dead yet speaketh."—HEBREWS xi. 4.

THERE is one sense in which this text admits the utmost generality of application. Every man who dies, speaks a lesson to survivors—even that lesson which is the oftenest told, but which is also the oftenest forgotten. There is on this subject a cleaving and a constitutional earthliness, which stands its ground against every demonstration—giving way, for a moment perhaps, at each of the successive instances, but recovering itself on the instant when the scenes, and the companionships, and the business of the world again close around us. We are the creatures of sense, and the present, the sensible world is the only one that we practically acknowledge. Carnality is the scriptural term for this disease of fallen humanity—a disease of marvellous inveteracy and force; and not to be dislodged, we fear, by any assault whatever, whether ordinary or extraordinary, on the mere sensibilities of nature. We are never more assured, than to translate a man from the walk of sight to the walk of faith, is a work of supernatural energy, than when we witness the impotency of all

natural appliances, and how the spell which binds him to the world is not to be broken by the loudest and most emphatic warnings of the world's vanity. A rooted preference of the interests of time to the interests of eternity—this is what arithmetic may disprove, but it is what arithmetic cannot dissipate. This is what the pathos and power of some affecting visitation may suspend, but which no visitation can ultimately quell; and after a brief season of sighs, and sensibilities, and tears, the man emerges again to as whole-hearted a secularity as before. Thus it is, that the thousand funerals which from childhood to age he may have attended, have only cradled him into a profounder spiritual lethargy; and that the frequent wrecks of mortality, through which he has ploughed his way on the ocean of life, have only stamped a sort of weather-beaten hardihood upon his soul. The man is more and more seasoned, as it were, by every repetition of death against its terrors, till, at last, himself dies in deep and hopeless apathy.

Such, we fear, is mainly the sad history of the world throughout its successive generations. Such is the infatuation of men walking in a vain show; and only more confirmed, by every instance of death, in false and fatal security. There is no question it ought to be otherwise. Every partaker of our nature who dies, should impressively remind us of our own mortality. Every exemplification of the unsparing and universal law, should be borne homeward in pointed and personal application to ourselves. There is not a human creature, however insignificant, who, simply by the act of expir-

ing, should not speak to us in accents of deepest seriousness; and tell, with an eloquence not to be resisted, of our own approaching end, our own sudden arrest, or dying agonies. All the tokens and mementoes of death should have this effect upon us—as every funeral bell, every open grave, every procession that day after day moves along our streets, and scarcely arrests the eye of the heedless passenger. Nor is it necessary that he should be a man of rank, or talent, or commanding influence, or wide and general popularity, who is thus borne along. Enough, if he be flesh of our flesh, and bone of our bone. The humblest of menials is fitted to be our monitor on such an occasion. Even he when dead speaketh; and if he do not effectually convince, he will at least most emphatically condemn.

I need not say, to this assembly of mourners, in what more striking and impressive form the lesson has been given to us. It is just as if death had wanted to make the highest demonstration of his sovereignty, and for this purpose had selected as his mark, him who stood the foremost, and the most conspicuous in the view of his countrymen. I speak not at present of any of the relations in which he stood to the living society immediately around him—to the thousands in church whom his well-known voice reached upon the Sabbath—to the tens of thousands in the city, whom, through the week, in the varied rounds and meetings of Christian philanthropy, he either guided by his counsel, or stimulated by his eloquence. You know, over and above, how far the wide, and the wakeful, and

the untired benevolence of his nature carried him; and that, in the labours, and the locomotions connected with these, he may be said to have become the personal acquaintance of the people of Scotland. Insomuch, that there is not a village in the land, where the tidings of his death have not conveyed the intimation, that a master in Israel has fallen; and I may also add, that such was the charm of his companionship, such the cordiality lighted up by his presence in every household, that, connected with this death, there is, at this moment, an oppressive sadness in the hearts of many thousands even of our most distant Scottish families. And so, a national lesson has been given forth by this event, even as a national loss has been incurred by it. It is a public death in the view of many spectators. And when one thinks of the vital energy by which every deed and every utterance were pervaded—of that prodigious strength which but gamboled with the difficulties that would have so depressed and overborne other men—of that prowess in conflict, and that promptitude in counsel with his fellows—of that elastic buoyancy which ever rose with the occasion, and bore him onward and upward to the successful termination of his cause—of the weight and multiplicity of his engagements; and yet, as if nothing could overwork that colossal mind, and that robust framework, the perfect lightness and facility wherewith all was executed,—when one thinks, in the midst of these powers and these performances, how intensely he laboured, I had almost said, how intensely he lived, in the midst of us, we cannot but acknowledge, that death, in

seizing upon him, hath made full proof of a mastery that sets all the might and all the promise of humanity at defiance.

But while in no possible way could general society have, through means of but one individual example, been more impressively told of the power of death—to you, in particular, it is a lesson of deepest pathos. The world at large can form no estimate of the tenderness which belongs to the spiritual relationship, though I trust that on this topic, mysterious to them, yet familiar, I hope and believe, to many of you, I now speak to a goodly number who can own him as their spiritual father. But even they who are strangers to the power and reality of these things, may comprehend the growing attachment of hearers to the minister, who, Sabbath after Sabbath, imparts to them of his own mental wealth, and excites in them somewhat of his own moral and religious earnestness. Even, apart from all personal acquaintance or intercourse, a sympathy with the personal ministrations of the clergyman under whom you sit, often draws a very close and binding affinity along with it. The man, with the very tones of whose voice you associate many of your most pleasing and hallowed recollections—the man to whom you feel yourselves indebted for the most delightful Sabbaths of other days—he who guided your devotions, and cleared away your difficulties, and pointed your path to heaven, and first opened the method of salvation, and by his expostulations, and his arguments, was the instrument of determining you to forsake all, and follow after Christ,—every Christian can tell,

that to that man there attaches an interest of no ordinary tenderness and force. Even a general and unconverted hearer may share in this affection—although only his understanding was regaled by the pulpit demonstration; or his imagination by its splendour and eloquence; or his conscience, so far impressed, as at least to recognise the general truth of the principles, and the perfect moral honesty and earnestness of him who urges and expounds them. The man who is frank and fearless, and able, and, above all, whose heart was fully charged with what may be called, the brotherhood of our nature; whose every look and utterance bespoke the strength of his own convictions, and the intensity of his zeal to plant them in the bosoms of other men,—that man would, in the course of months, or of years, become the general friend of the multitude whom he addresses; apart from all separate converse and fellowship with the individuals who compose it. Though only the pulpit acquaintance, and not at all the personal of the many hundreds who listen to him, yet in this capacity alone might he obtain a mighty hold of their affections notwithstanding. At once the soul and mouth of the congregation, he is on high vantage-ground for such an ascendancy. He speaks as it were from a pre-eminence, and, having all the moral forces of the gospel at command, it is incalculable with what sure and general effect, a minister, even of ordinary talents, if but of acknowledged honesty and worth, can subdue the people under him. But his was no ordinary championship; and although the weapons of our spiritual warfare are

the same in every hand, we all know that there was none who wielded them more vigorously than he did, or who, with such an arm of might, and voice of resistless energy, carried, as if by storm, the convictions of his people. That such an arm should now be motionless, that such a voice should be for ever hushed in deep and unbroken silence, is to all a thought of profoundest melancholy. But he was the special property of his hearers, and to them it comes far more urgently and impressively home, than does any general object of touching or tragic contemplation. To them it is a personal bereavement,—and whether or not on the terms with him of individual converse, they droop and are in heaviness, because of their now widowed Sabbaths, their bereft and desolated sanctuary.

But the lesson is prodigiously enhanced, when we pass from his pulpit to his household ministrations. I perhaps do him wrong, in supposing that any large proportion of his hearers did not know him personally—for such was his matchless superiority to fatigue, such the unconquerable strength and activity of his nature, that he may almost be said to have accomplished a sort of personal ubiquity among his people. But ere you can appreciate the whole effect of this, let me advert to a principle of very extensive operation in nature. Painters know it well. They are aware, how much it adds to the force and beauty of any representation of theirs, when made strikingly and properly to contrast with the back-ground on which it is projected. And the same is as true of direct nature, set forth in one of her own immediate scenes, as of reflex

nature, set forth by the imagination and pencil of an artist. This is often exemplified in those Alpine wilds, where beauty may, at times, be seen embosomed in the lap of grandeur,—as when, at the base of a lofty precipice, some spot of verdure, or peaceful cottage-home, seems to smile in more intense loveliness, because of the towering strength and magnificence which are behind it. Apply this to character, and think how precisely analogous the effect is—when, from the ground-work of a character that, mainly, in its texture and general aspect, is masculine, there do effloresce the forth-puttings of a softer nature, and those gentler charities of the heart, which come out irradiated in tenfold beauty, when they arise from a substratum of moral strength and grandeur underneath. It is thus, when the man of strength shows himself the man of tenderness; and he who, sturdy and impregnable in every righteous cause, makes his graceful descent to the ordinary companionships of life, is found to mingle, with kindred warmth, in all the cares and the sympathies of his fellow-men. Such, I am sure, is the touching recollection of very many who now hear me, and who can tell, in their own experience, that the vigour of his pulpit, was only equalled by the fidelity and the tenderness of his household ministrations. They understand the whole force and significancy of the contrast I have now been speaking of—when the pastor of the church becomes the pastor of the family; and he who, in the crowded assembly, held imperial sway over every understanding, entered some parent's lowly dwelling, and prayed and wept along with them over their

infant's dying bed. It is on occasions like these when the minister carries to its highest pitch the moral ascendancy which belongs to his station. It is this which furnishes him with a key to every heart, —and when the triumphs of charity are superadded to the triumphs of argument, then it is that he sits enthroned over the affections of a willing people.

But I dare not venture any further on this track of observation. While yet standing aghast at a death which has come upon us all with the rapidity of a whirlwind, it might be easy, by means of a few touching and graphic recollections, to raise a tempest of emotion in the midst of you. It might be easy to awaken, in vivid delineation to the view of your mind, him who but a few days ago trod upon the streets of our city with the footsteps of firm manhood; and took part, with all his accustomed earnestness and vigour, in the busy concerns of living men. We could image forth the intense vitality which beamed in every look, and kept up, to the last moment, the incessant play of a mind, that was the fertile and ever-eddying fountain of just and solid thoughts. We could ask you to think of that master-spirit, with what presiding efficacy, yet with what perfect lightness and ease, he moved among his fellow-men; and, whether in the hall of debate, or in the circles of private conviviality, subordinated all to his purposes and views. We could fasten your regards on that dread encounter, when Death met this most powerful and resolute of men upon his way, and, laying instant arrest upon his movements, held him forth, in view of the citizens, as the proudest, while the most

appalling of his triumphs. We could bid you weep at the thought of his agonized family—or rather, hurrying away from this big and unsupportable distress, we would tell of the public grief and the public consternation, and how the tidings of some great disaster flew from household to household, till, under the feeling of one common and overwhelming bereavement, the whole city became a city of mourners. We could recall to you that day when the earth was committed to the earth from which it came; and the deep seriousness that sat on every countenance bespoke, not the pageantry, but the whole power and reality of woe. We could point to his closing sepulchre, and read to you there the oft-repeated lesson of man's fading and evanescent glories. But we gladly, my brethren, we gladly make our escape from all these images, and all these sentiments, of oppressive melancholy. We would fain take refuge in other views, and betake ourselves to some other direction. What I should like, if I could accomplish it, were to take a calm and deliberate survey of a character, the exposition of which would, in fact, be the exposition of certain great principles, that I might hold up to your reverence and your practical imitation. It is thus, in fact, that he, though dead, yet speaks unto you. In attempting the office of an interpreter between the dead and the living, I feel the whole difficulty of the task which has been put into my hands; and I have to crave the indulgence of my fellow-mourners for one, who, after a preparation of infirmity and sorrow, now addresses them in fear, and in weakness, and with much trembling.

My observations will resolve themselves into two heads—the *character of the theologian*, and the *character of the man:* and in the prosecution of which, I trust that both the influences of sound doctrine and of sound example may be brought to bear upon you.

First, then, in briefest possible definition, his was the olden theology of Scotland. A thoroughly devoted son of our Church, he was, through life, the firm, the unflinching advocate of its articles, and its formularies, and its rights, and the whole polity of its constitution and discipline. His creed he derived, by inheritance, from the fathers of the Scottish Reformation—not, however, as based on human authority, but as based and upholden on the authority of Scripture alone. Its two great articles are—Justification, only by the righteousness of Christ—Sanctification, only by that Spirit which Christ is commissioned to bestow,—the one derived to the believer by faith; the other derived by faith too, because obtained and realised in the exercise of believing prayer. This simple and sublime theology, connecting the influences of Heaven with the moralities of earth, did the founders of our Church incorporate, by their catechisms, with the education of the people; and, through the medium of a clergy, who maintained their orthodoxy and their zeal for several generations, was it faithfully and efficiently preached in all the parishes of the land. The whole system originated in deepest piety; and has resulted in the formation of the most moral and intelligent peasantry in Europe. Yet, in spite of this palpable evidence in its favour,

it fell into discredit. Along with the elegant literature of our sister country, did the meagre Arminianism of her church make invasion among our clergy; and we certainly receded for a time from the good old way of our forefathers. This was the middle age of the Church of Scotland, an age of cold and feeble rationality, when Evangelism was derided as fanatical, and its very phraseology was deemed an ignoble and vulgar thing, in the upper classes of society. A morality without godliness—a certain prettiness of sentiment, served up in tasteful and well-turned periods of composition—the ethics of Philosophy, or of the academic chair, rather than the ethics of the Gospel—the speculations of Natural Theology, and perhaps an ingenious and scholar-like exposition of the credentials, rather than a faithful exposition of the contents of the New Testament,—These for a time dispossessed the topics of other days, and occupied that room in our pulpits, which had formerly been given to the demonstrations of sin, and of the Saviour. You know there has been a reflux. The tide of sentiment has been turned; and there is none who has given it greater momentum, or borne it more triumphantly along, than did the lamented Pastor of this congregation. His talents and his advocacy have thrown a lustre around the cause. The prejudices of thousands have given way before the might and the mastery of his resistless demonstrations. The evangelical system has of consequence risen, has risen prodigiously of late years, in the estimation of general society—connected to a great degree, we doubt not, under the blessing of God,

with his powerful appeals to Scripture, and his no less powerful appeals to the consciences of men.

But, in the doing of this great service to the Christianity of the nation, he has laid you, his individual hearers, under a heavy load of responsibility for yourselves. You will never forget, I trust, either the terror of his loud and emphatic denunciations; or, what is still more persuasive, the urgency of his beseeching voice. You will remember the powerful and the pleading earnestness wherewith he hath so often dealt forth upon you, the impressive simplicities of the gospel—as, that Christ is the only Saviour; and the way of his prescribed holiness the only road to a blissful immortality. Your personal Christianity, my brethren, would be his best and noblest memorial—the most satisfactory evidence, that through the organs of recollection and conscience, he was still speaking to you. Often hath he plied you with the warnings of Scripture; and now, God himself hath interposed, and superadded to these the solemn warning of Providence. He hath recalled His ambassador, and you will soon follow him to the reckoning,—him to give account of his ministry; and you, on this principle of gospel equity, that to whom much is given, of him much will be required,—you to give account of the fruit of his ministrations.

I can afford to say no more on the character of his theology,—but, additional to this, and distinct from this, I would speak of what I term a characteristic of his theology. I beg you will attend for a moment to the difference of these two. The character is general, and that which he had in com-

mon with the members of a class,—the characteristic is special, or that by which his own individual theology was signalized, and by which I think it was ennobled. Could I make myself intelligible on this matter, it might furnish a cipher for the explanation of what many have called his peculiarities; but, instead of which, you would at once see the great and the high principle which gave birth to them all.

The indispensable brevity of this explanation, both adds to the difficulty of my task, and forms a call on your more strenuous and sustained attention to me.

There is a distinction made by moralists, between the determinate and the indeterminate virtues. I will not attempt to define, but I will illustrate this distinction by an example.

Justice is a determinate virtue, and why?—because the precise line which separates it from its opposite, admits of being drawn with rigid and arithmetical precision; and he who transgresses this line by the minutest fraction, is clearly and distinctly chargeable with injustice. It is thus, that, in respect of this particular virtue, there may turn, on the difference of a single farthing, the utmost difference, or, I should rather say, the most distinct and diametric opposition between two characters. He who defrauds or steals, though but to the amount of a farthing, not only differs in degree, but differs in kind, or belongs to a distinct and opposite *genus* of character, from him whom no temptation could ever lead to swerve from the unbending and rectilineal course of virtue,—who would recoil

with the utmost moral determination and delicacy from the slightest deviation; and would feel, as if principle had struck its surrender, and was now lying prostrate and degraded, should he enter by a single inch, or plant one footstep on the forbidden territory.

Generosity, again, is an indeterminate virtue, and why?—because there is no such definite line of separation between this virtue and its counterpart vice, as that you could pass by instant transition from it to its opposite. It does not proceed by arithmetical differences of a farthing more or less. You could not, as in the place of distinction between justice and injustice, put your finger at the point, where, in respect of this virtue of generosity, two men, by ever so little on the opposite sides of it, stood contrasted in diametric opposition to each other. The man who differs from his neighbour in withholding the farthing that is due, differs as much from him, as a vice does from its opposite virtue. The man who differs from his neighbour in withholding the farthing that would have brought his donation to an equality with the other's, only differs, not in kind but in degree and that very imperceptibly, being only a little less liberal, and a little less generous than his fellow, In the determinate virtue, one, by a single farthing, or a single footstep, might pass from a state of pure and exalted morality to a state of crime. In the indeterminate, there is what painters would call a shading off—a melting of hues into each other—a slow and insensible graduation.

It is not then with a determinate, as with an

indeterminate virtue. You cannot tamper with it, even to the extent of the humblest fraction, without making an entire sacrifice. It has its palpable and precise landmark; and you cannot permit the encroachment of a single hair-breadth, without a virtual giving up of the whole territory. This principle is fully recognised in the ethics of Scripture: "He who is unfaithful in the least, is unfaithful also in much." Who would ever think of doing away the turpitude or the disgracefulness of theft, by alleging the paltriness and insignificance of the thing stolen? It is thus that the little pilferments of household service; the countless peccadilloes which go on in the departments of business, and confidential agency; the innumerable freedoms which are currently practised, and that without remorse, along the line which separates the just from the unjust,—do bespeak a fearful relaxation of principle in society. And it is thus also, on the other hand, that the purest and most honourable virtue, even to the extent of a moral chivalry, may be exemplified in littles. And, on the reverse position, that "he who is faithful in the least, is faithful also in much," may the Christian domestic, in the perfect sacredness and safety of all that is committed to her, even to the minutest articles of her custody and care, show forth the heroism of sublimest principle.

A determinate virtue can no more bear to be violated, even though only by one footstep of encroachment, than an independent country can bear an entrance upon its border, though only by half a mile, on the part of an invading army. It is enough,

in either instance, if the line be only crossed, to call forth in the one case the remonstrances of offended principle, and in the other, the resistance and the fire of indignant patriotism. In neither example, needs the material harm to have been of any sensible amount, that in both there might be the utmost feeling of a moral violence.

Before applying this principle to the object of appreciating the character of our dear and departed friend, let me remark, that Scripture, all over, is full of the principle, and full of the most striking and pertinent illustrations of it. "Thou mayest not eat of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die." This was a determinate prohibition—and by the eating, though it had only been of one apple, complete and conclusive outrage was done to it. The tree, uninjured by this act of disobedience, might, in the profusion of its golden clusters, have stood forth, to all appearance, in as great wealth and loveliness as before. But a definite commandment was broken; and therein it was that the whole damage and desecration lay. The jurisprudence of heaven was at stake; and so, on this solitary apple hinged the fate of our world. Infidels deride the history. Like those wretched arithmetical moralists, who make virtue an affair of product, and not of principle, they are unable to see how the moral grandeur of the transaction just rises, in proportion to the humility of its material accompaniments; and so, in the event of our earth burdened with a curse to its latest generations, do we behold at once the truth of our principle, and

terrible demonstration given to the unbroken sanctity of the Godhead.

And the same principle ever and anon breaks forth in the subsequent dealings of God with the world. Let me only instance from the history of Israel's entrance into the promised land. The silver and the gold that were taken from their enemies, were all to be brought as consecrated things into the treasury of the Lord. This was a determinate precept; and just because of one violation, the progress of the Jewish victories was arrested, and the frown of Heaven's offended authority spread disaster and dismay over the hosts of Israel. It was Achan's accursed thing which distempered for a time, and was like to have blasted, the whole undertaking. They were his goodly Babylonish garment, and wedge of gold, and two hundred shekels of silver—secreted in the midst of an otherwise immaculate camp—that called forth the resentment and the reckoning of a God of vengeance; and, not till the whole burden of this provocation was swept away—not till the offence, and the offending household, were taken forth from the midst of the congregation and destroyed—did God turn Him from the fierceness of his anger, or was the jealousy of Heaven appeased, because of the injury done to a commandment intact and unviolable.

And, lastly, what has been so often exemplified in the history of the Old, is alike exemplified in the doctrines and declarations of the New Testament. "A man," says the apostle, "is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of

Jesus Christ." This is a determinate principle; but the Judaizing Christians would fain have introduced one slight and circumstantial exception to it. They made a stand for the rite of circumcision; and were willing that all the other works of the law should be discharged from the matter of our justifying righteousness, were there only, along with the faith of Christ, a place found for this distinguishing ordinance of their nation. It is against this demand and predilection of the Jews that the apostle sets himself, in his epistle to the Galatians—where he rejects the compromise; and proves, by admirable reasoning, that it would not only deform the faith of the Gospel, but destroy it.

Admit this, trifling though it may appear, and "Christ is dead in vain;" you have fallen from your dependence upon Him, and he has "become of no effect unto you." It is thus, that this bold, this uncompromising champion of the Church's purity, has bequeathed, in this epistle, a precious example to the Christian ministers of all ages. What Luther, after him, called the article of a standing or a falling church, is here defended from the contact and the contamination of every deleterious ingredient. The *materiel* of a sinner's justification with God, instead of being partitioned, as many would have it, between the righteousness of Christ and the righteousness of man, is strenuously contended for by the apostle in this argument, as being pure, unmixed, and homogeneous. The epistle to the Galatians is a composition charged throughout with the very essence of principle; and the thing to be noted is, that while in appearance

Paul is only warding off from the religion of Christ a misplaced or incongruous ceremony, he embarks the whole of his apostolic strength and apostolic zeal upon the contest, and is, in fact, fighting for the foundations of the faith.

This will at once prepare you to understand, what I have taken the liberty of terming, a characteristic of his theology, whose general character I have described as being the theology of the Church of Scotland. The peculiarity lay in this, that present him with a measure, and he, of all other men, saw at once, and with the force of instant discernment, the principle that was embodied in it. And did that principle belong to the class of the determinate, he furthermore saw, with every sound moralist before him, that he could not recede, by one inch or hair-breadth, from the assertion of it, without making a virtual surrender of the whole. The point of resistance then, it is obvious, must be at the beginning of the mischief—or at that part in the border of the vineyard, where it first threatened to make inroad. It was there he planted his footstep; and there, with the might and prowess of a champion, did he ward off from our Church, many a hurtful and withering contamination. His was never a puerile or unmeaning conflict—but a conflict of high moral elements. It was the warfare of a giant, enlisted on the side of some great principle; and, with a heart always in the right place, it was this which imparted a substantial rectitude to every cause, and threw a moral grandeur over all his controversies.

You are aware that no two things can be more

dissimilar, than a religion of points, and a religion of principles. No one will suspect his of being a religion of senseless or unmeaning points. Altogether, there was a manhood in his understanding —a strength and a firmness in the whole staple of his mind, as remote as possible from whatever is weakly and superstitiously fanciful. It is therefore, you will find, that whenever he laid the stress of his zeal or energy on a cause—instead of a stress disproportionate to its importance, there was always the weight of some great, some cardinal principle underneath to sustain it. It is thus, that every subject he undertook was throughout charged with sentiment. The whole drift and doings of the man were instinct with it; and that, too, sentiment fresh from the word of God, or warm with generous enthusiasm for the best interests of the Church and of the species.

There is one peculiarity by which he was signalized above all his fellows; and which makes him an incalculable loss, both to the Church and to the Country at large. We have known men of great power, but they wanted promptitude; and we have known men of great promptitude, but they wanted power. The former, if permitted to concentrate their energies on one great object, may, by dint of a riveted perseverance, succeed in its accomplishment—but they cannot bear to have this concentration broken up; and it is torture to all their habits, when assailed by the importunity of those manifold and miscellaneous applications, to which every public man is exposed, from the philanthropy of our modern day. The latter again—that is, they

who have the promptitude but not the power, facility without force, and whose very lightness favours both the exceeding variety and velocity of their movements,—why, they are alert and serviceable, and can acquit themselves in a respectable way of any slender or secondary part which is put into their hands; but then, they want predominance and momentum in any one direction to which they may betake themselves. But in him, never did such ponderous faculties meet with such marvellous power of wielding them at pleasure,—insomuch, that even on the impulse of most unforeseen occasions, he could bring them immediately to bear —and that, with sweeping and resistless effect, on the object before him. Such a combination of forces enlisted, as all within him was, on the side of Christianity, would have been of incalculable service in this our day. It is true, the land in which we live is yet free from the taint and the scandal of so gross an abomination; but you cannot fail to have remarked, how, mixed up with their rancorous politics, there have of late been the frequent outbreakings of a coarse and revolting impiety in the popular meetings of England. In the whole compass of the moral world, we know not a more hideous spectacle than plebeian infidelity, with its rude invectives, its savage and boisterous outcry against all the restraints and institutions of the gospel. If, indeed, our next war is to be a war of principles, then, before the battle is begun, the noblest of our champions has fallen. Yet we dare not give up in despondency, a cause, which has truth for its basis, and the guarantee of Heaven's

omnipotence for its complete and everlasting triumph. In this reeling of the nations, this gradual loosening of all spirits from the ancient holds of habit and of principle—still we cannot fear that the Church, the one and indestructible Church, though tossed and cradled in the storm, will not be riveted more securely upon its basis. "We are distressed, but not in despair; troubled, yet not forsaken; cast down, yet not destroyed." "Help, Lord, when the godly man ceaseth, and the righteous fail from the children of men."

But let me again offer one word of special address to the members of his congregation. I have spoken of his resistance to compromise in all the great matters of Christian faith and Christian practice. Let me entreat, that though dead, he may still speak this lesson to you. I would rather, and I am quite sure that all along he would, that your security before God rested altogether on works, or altogether on grace, rather than that, like the feet of Nebuchadnezzar's image, partly of clay, and partly of iron, it rested on the motley foundation of two unlike and heterogeneous ingredients. Hold fast what you have gotten from him on this subject; and be assured, that if, forgetful of the decision and distinctness of his principles, you ever shall listen with pleasure to him who vacillates from the one to the other, or would attempt a composition between the righteousness of man, and the righteousness of Christ—there is not a likelier method in which shipwreck can be made both of the faith and the piety of this congregation. And you know, that while none more clear and confident than he

in preaching the dogmata of his creed, he was far, and very far from being a preacher of dogmata alone. You recollect his earnest enforcement of duty in all that concerned the relation between God and man, and in all that concerned the relations of human society. But it was duty bottomed on an evangelical ground-work—even on those deep and well-laid principles of belief, by which alone the righteousness of the life and practice is upholden. He was truly a preacher of faith—yet his last words in this pulpit, may be regarded as his dying testimony to the worth of that charity which is greater than faith. I do not mean the charity of a mere contribution by the hand; but the charity of that love in the heart, which prompts to all the services of humanity.*

I must now satisfy myself with a few slight and rapid touches on his character as a man. It is a subject I dare hardly approach. To myself, he was at all times a joyous, hearty, gallant, honourable, and out and out most trust-worthy friend—while, in harmony with a former observation, there were beautifully projected on this broad and general ground-work, some of friendship's finest and most considerate delicacies. By far the most declared and discernible feature in his character, was a dauntless, and direct, and right-forward honesty, that needed no disguise for itself, and was impatient of aught like dissimulation or disguise in other men. There were withal a heart and a hilarity in his companionship, that every where carried its own

* His last sermon, preached with all his accustomed earnestness and zeal, was a pleading in behalf of the Infirmary of Edinburgh.

welcome along with it; and there were none who moved with greater acceptance, or wielded a greater ascendant over so wide a circle of living society. Christianity does not overbear the constitutional varieties either of talent or of temperament. After the conversion of the apostles, their complexional differences of mind and character remained with them; and, there can be no doubt that, apart from, and anterior to the influence of the gospel, the hand of nature had stamped a generosity, and a sincerity, and an openness on the subject of our description, among the very strongest of the lineaments which belong to him. Under an urgent sense of rectitude, he delivered himself with vigour and with vehemence, in behalf of what he deemed to be its cause—but I would have you to discriminate between the vehemence of passion, and the vehemence of sentiment, which, like though they be in outward expression, are wholly different and dissimilar in themselves. His was, mainly, the vehemence of sentiment, which, hurrying him when it did, into what he afterwards felt to be excesses, were immediately followed up by the relentings of a noble nature. The pulpit is not the place for the idolatry of an unqualified panegyric on any of our fellow-mortals—but it is impossible not to acknowledge, that whatever might have been his errors, he was right at bottom—that truth, and piety, and ardent philanthropy formed the substratum of his character; and that the tribute was altogether a just one, when the profoundest admiration, along with the pungent regrets of his fellow-citizens, did follow him to his grave.

THE UTILITY OF MISSIONS ASCERTAINED BY EXPERIENCE:

A

SERMON,

PREACHED BEFORE THE

SOCIETY IN SCOTLAND

FOR

PROPAGATING CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE,

(INCORPORATED BY ROYAL CHARTER,)

AT THEIR

ANNIVERSARY MEETING

IN THE

HIGH CHURCH OF EDINBURGH,

ON

THURSDAY, JUNE 2, 1814.

SERMON VII.

THE UTILITY OF MISSIONS ASCERTAINED BY EXPERIENCE.

"And Nathanael said unto him, Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, Come and see."—JOHN i. 46.

THE principle of association, however useful in the main, has a blinding and misleading effect in many instances. Give it a wide enough field of induction to work upon, and it will carry you to a right conclusion upon any one case or question that comes before you. But the evil is, that it often carries you forward with as much confidence upon a limited, as upon an enlarged field of experience; and the man of narrow views will, upon a few paltry individual recollections, be as obstinate in the assertion of his own maxim, and as boldly come forward with his own sweeping generality, as if the whole range of nature and observation had been submitted to him.

To aggravate the mischief, the opinion thus formed upon the specialities of his own limited experience, obtains a holding and a tenacity in his mind, which dispose him to resist all the future facts and instances that come before him. Thus it is that the opinion becomes a prejudice; and that no statement, however true, or however impressive, will be able to dislodge it. You may accumulate facts

upon facts; but the opinion he has already formed, has acquired a certain right of pre-occupancy over him. It is a law of the mind which, like the similar law of society, often carries it over the original principles of justice; and it is this which gives so strong a positive influence to error, and makes its overthrow so very slow and laborious an operation.

I know not the origin of the prejudice respecting the town of Nazareth; or what it was that gave rise to an aphorism of such sweeping universality, as that no good thing could come out of it. Perhaps in two, three, or more instances, individuals may have come out of it who threw a discredit over the place of their nativity, by the profligacy of their actions. Hence an association between the very name of the town, and the villany of its inhabitants. The association forms into an opinion. The opinion is embodied into a proverb, and is transmitted in the shape of a hereditary prejudice to future generations. It is likely enough, that many instances could have been appealed to, of people from the town of Nazareth, who gave evidence in their characters and lives against the prejudice in question. But it is not enough that evidence be offered by the one party. It must be attended to by the other. The disposition to resist it must be got over. The love of truth and justice must prevail over that indolence which likes to repose, without disturbance, in its present convictions; and over that malignity which, I fear, makes a dark and hostile impression of others, too congenial to many hearts. Certain it is, that when the strongest possible demonstration was offered in the person

of Him who was the finest example of the good and fair, it was found that the inveteracy of the prejudice could withstand it; and it is to be feared that with the question, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" there were many in that day who shut their eyes and their affections against Him.

Thus it was that the very name of a town, fastened an association of prejudice upon all its inhabitants. But this is only one example out of the many. A sect may be thrown into discredit by a very few of its individual specimens, and the same association be fastened upon all its members. A society may be thrown into discredit by the failure of one or two of its undertakings, and this will be enough to entail suspicion and ridicule upon all its future operations. A system may be thrown into discredit by the fanaticism and folly of some of its advocates; and it may be long before it emerges from the contempt of a precipitate and unthinking public, ever ready to follow the impulse of her former recollections—it may be long before it is reclaimed from obscurity by the eloquence of future defenders; and there may be the struggle and the perseverance of many years before the existing association, with all its train of obloquies and disgusts and prejudices, shall be overthrown.

A lover of truth is thus placed on the right field for the exercise of his principles. It is the field of his faith and of his patience, and in which he is called to a manly encounter with the enemies of his cause. He may have much to bear, and little but the mere force of principle to uphold him. But

what a noble exhibition of mind, when this force is enough for it; when, though unsupported by the sympathy of other minds, it can rest on the truth and righteousness of its own principle; when it can select its objects from among the thousand entanglements of error, and keep by it amidst all the clamours of hostility and contempt; when all the terrors of disgrace cannot alarm it; when all the levities of ridicule cannot shame it; when all the scowl of opposition cannot overwhelm it!

There are some very fine examples of such a contest, and of such a triumph, in the history of Philosophy. In the progress of speculation, the doctrine of the *occult qualities* fell into disrepute; and every thing that could be associated with such a doctrine was disgraced and borne down by the authority of the reigning school. When Sir Isaac Newton's Theory of Gravitation was announced to the world, if it had not the persecution of violence, it had at least the persecution of contempt to struggle with. It had the sound of an occult principle, and it was charged with all the bigotry and mysticism of the schoolmen. This kept it out for a time from the chairs and universities of Europe, and for years a kind of obscure and ignoble sectarianism was annexed to that name which has been carried down on such a tide of glory to distant ages. Let us think of this, when philosophers bring their name and their authority to bear upon us, when they pour contempt on the truth which we love and on the system which we defend; and as they fasten their epithets upon us, let us take comfort in thinking, that we are under the very

ordeal through which philosophy herself had to pass, before she achieved the most splendid of her victories.

Sure I am, that the philosophers of that age could not have a more impetuous contempt for the occult principle, which they conceived to lie in the doctrine of gravitation, than many of our present philosophers have for the equally occult principle which they conceive to lie in the all-subduing efficacy of the Christian Faith over every mind which embraces it. Each of these two doctrines is mighty in its pretensions. The one asserts a principle to be now in operation; and, which, reigning over the material world, gives harmony to all its movements. The other asserts a principle which it wants to put into operation, to apply to all minds, to carry round the globe, and to visit with its influence all the accessible dominions of the moral world. Mighty anticipation! It promises to rectify all disorder; to extirpate all vice; to dry up the source of all those sins and sufferings and sorrows, which have spread such dismal and unseemly ravages over the face of society; to turn every soul from Satan unto God; or, in other words, to annihilate that disturbing force which has jarred the harmony of the moral world, and make all its parts tend obediently to the Deity as its centre and its origin.

But how can this principle be put into operation? How shall it be brought into contact with a soul at the distance of a thousand miles from the place in which we are now standing? I know no other conceivable way than sending a messenger in possession of the principle himself, and able to convey

it into the mind of another by his powers of communication. The precept of "Go and preach the gospel unto every creature," would obtain a very partial obedience indeed, if there was no actual moving of the preacher from one place or neighbourhood to another. Were he to stand still, he might preach to some creatures; he might get a smaller or a larger number to assemble around him: And it is to be hoped, that, from the stationary pulpits of a Christian country, the preaching of the Word has been made to bear with efficacy on the souls of multitudes. But in reference to the vast majority of the world, that may still be said which was said by an apostle in the infant state of our religion, How shall they hear without a preacher, and how shall they preach except they be sent? It is the single circumstance of being sent, which forms the peculiarity so much contended for by one part of the British public, and so much resisted by the other. The Preacher who is so sent is, in good Latin, termed a *Missionary;* and such is the magical power which lies in the very sound of this hateful and obnoxious term, that it is no sooner uttered than a thousand associations of dislike and prejudice start into existence. And yet you would think it very strange: The term itself is perfectly correct, in point of etymology. Many of those who are so clamorous in their hostility against it, feel no contempt for the mere act of preaching, sit with all decency and apparent seriousness under it, and have a becoming respect for the character of a preacher. Convert the Preacher into a Missionary, and all you have done is merely to graft upon the

man's preaching the circumstance of locomotion. How comes it that the talent, and the eloquence, and the principle, which appeared so respectable in your eyes, so long as they stood still, lose all their respectability so soon as they begin to move? It is certainly conceivable, that the personal qualities which bear with salutary influence upon the human beings of one place, may pass unimpaired and have the same salutary influence upon the human beings of another. But this is a missionary process; and though unable to bring forward any substantial exception against the thing, they cannot get the better of the disgust excited by the term. They cannot release their understanding from the influence of its old associations; and these philosophers are repelled from truth, and frightened out of the way which leads to it, by the bugbear of a name.

The precept is "Go and preach the gospel to every creature under heaven." The people I allude to have no particular quarrel with the *preach;* but they have a mortal antipathy to the *go:*—and should even their own admired preacher offer to go himself, or help to send others, he becomes a missionary, or the advocate of a mission; and the question of my text is set up in resistance to the whole scheme, "Can any good thing come out of it?"

I never felt myself in more favourable circumstances for giving an answer to the question, than I do at this moment, surrounded as I am by the members of a society, which has been labouring for upwards of a century in the field of missionary exertion. It need no longer be taken up or treated

as a speculative question. The question of the text may, in reference to the subject now before us, be met immediately by the answer of the text, "Come and see." We call upon you to look to a set of actual performances, to examine the record of past doings; and, like good philosophers as you are, to make the sober depositions of history carry it over the reveries of imagination and prejudice. We deal in proofs, not in promises; in practice, not in profession; in experience, and not in experiment. The society whose cause I am now appointed to plead in your hearing, is to all intents and purposes a Missionary Society. It has a claim to all the honour, and must just submit to all the disgrace which such a title carries along with it. It has been in the habit for many years of hiring preachers and teachers; and may be convicted, times without number, of the act of sending them to a distance. What the precise distance is I do not understand to be of any signification to the argument; but even though it should, I fear that in the article of distance, our Society has at times been as extravagant as many of her neighbours. Her labourers have been met with in other quarters of the world. They have been found among the haunts of savages. They have dealt with men in the very infancy of social improvement; and their zeal for proselytism has far outstripped that sober preparatory management, which is so much contended for. Why, they have carried the gospel message into climes on which Europe had never impressed a single trace of her boasted civilization. They have tried the species in the first stages of

its rudeness and ferocity; nor did they keep back the offer of the Saviour from their souls, till art and industry had performed a sufficient part, and were made to administer in fuller abundance to the wants of their bodies. This process which has been so much insisted upon, they did not wait for. They preached and they prayed at the very outset, and they put into exercise all the weapons of their spiritual ministry. In a word, they have done all the fanatical and offensive things, which have been charged upon other missionaries. If there be folly in such enterprises as these, our Society has the accumulated follies of a whole century upon her forehead. She is among the vilest of the vile; and the same overwhelming ridicule which has thrown the mantle of ignominy over other societies, will lay all her honours and pretensions in the dust.

We are not afraid of linking the claims of our Society with the general merits of the Missionary cause. With this cause she stands or falls. When the spirit of missionary enterprise is afloat in the country, she will not be neglected among the multiplicity of other objects. She will not suffer from the number or the activity of kindred societies. They who conceive alarm upon this ground, have not calculated upon the productive powers of benevolence. They have not meditated deeply upon the operation of this principle, nor do they conceive how a general impulse given to the missionary spirit, may work the twofold effect of multiplying the number of societies, and of providing for each of them more abundantly than ever.

The fact is undeniable. In this corner of the

empire, there is an impetuous and overbearing contempt for every thing connected with the name of Missionary. The cause has been outraged by a thousand indecencies. Every thing like the coolness of the philosophical spirit has been banished from one side of the controversy; and all the epithets of disgrace, which a perverted ingenuity could devise, have been unsparingly lavished on the noblest benefactors of the species. We have reason to believe that this opposition is not so extensive, nor so virulent, in England. It is due to certain provincial associations, and may be accounted for. It is more a Scottish peculiarity; and while, with our neighbours in the south, it is looked upon as a liberal and enlightened cause—as a branch of that very principle which abolished the Slave Trade of Africa—as one of the wisest, and likeliest experiments, which, in this age of benevolent enterprise, is now making for the interests of the world—as a scheme ennobled by the patronage of royalty, supported by the contributions of opulence; sanctified by the prayers and the wishes of philanthropy; assisted by men of the first science, and the first scholarship; carrying into execution by as hardy adventurers as ever trode the desert in quest of novelty; and enriching grammar, geography, and natural knowledge, by the discoveries they are making every year, as to the statistics of all countries, and the peculiarities of all languages—While, I say, such are the dignified associations thrown around the Missionary cause in England; in this country I am sorry to tell a very different set of collaterals is annexed to it. A great proportion

of our nobility, gentry, and clergy, look upon it as a very low and drivelling concern; as a visionary enterprise, and that no good thing can come out of it; as a mere dreg of sectarianism, and which none but sectarians, or men who should have been sectarians, have any relish or respect for. The torrent of prejudice runs strongly against it;—and the very name of Missionary excites the most nauseous antipathy, in the hearts of many, who, in other departments, approve themselves to be able, and candid, and reflecting inquirers.

We have no doubt that in the course of years all this will pass away. But reason and experience are slow in their operation; and, in the mean time, we count it fair to neutralize, if possible, one prejudice by another; to school down a Scottish antipathy by a Scottish predilection; and to take shelter from the contempt, that is now so blindly and so wantonly pouring on the best of causes, under the respected name of a society, which has earned, by the services of a hundred years, the fairest claims on the gratitude and veneration of all our countrymen. Come and see the effect of her Missionary exertions. It is palpable, and near at hand. It lies within the compass of many a summer tour; and tell me, ye children of fancy, who expatiate with a delighted eye over the wilds of our mountain scenery, if it be not a dearer and a worthier exercise still, to contemplate the habits of her once rugged and wandering population. What would they have been at this moment, had Schools, and Bibles, and Ministers, been kept back from them? and had the men of a century ago been deterred

by the flippancies of the present age, from the work of planting chapels and seminaries in that neglected land? The ferocity of their ancestors would have come down, unsoftened and unsubdued, to the existing generation. The darkening spirit of hostility would still have lowered upon us from the North; and these plains, now so peaceful and so happy, would have lain open to the fury of merciless invaders. O ye soft and sentimental travellers who wander so securely over this romantic land, you are right to choose the season when the angry elements of nature are asleep! But what is it that has charmed to their long repose the more dreadful elements of human passion and human injustice? What is it that has quelled the boisterous spirit of her natives?—and while her torrents roar as fiercely, and her mountain brows look as grimly as ever, what is that which has thrown so softening an influence over the minds and manners of her living population?

I know that there are several causes; but sure I am, that the civilizing influence of our Society has had an important share. If it be true that our country is indebted to her Schools and her Bibles for the most intelligent and virtuous peasantry in Europe, let it never be forgotten that the Schools in the establishment of our Society are nearly equal to one-third of all the parishes in Scotland; that these Schools are chiefly to be met with in the Highland district; that they bear as great a proportion to the Highland population, as all our parochial seminaries do to all our population; or in other words, had the local convenience for the attendance

of scholars been as great as in other parts of the country, the apparatus set a-going by our Society, for the education of the Highland peasantry, would have been as effective as the boasted provision of the legislature, for the whole of Scotland.*

* This want of local convenience for the attendance of scholars, is the chief difficulty which our Society has to struggle with. The number of scholars bears to the population the proportion stated in the text; but think of the broad surface of a thinly-peopled country, intersected with deep bays, and crossed in every direction by the natural barriers of lakes and mountains. There are only two ways in which education can be carried over the face of a country so peculiarly formed. The first way is, by the multiplication of stationary points, from which learning may emanate among the children in distinct neighbourhoods. The second way is, by the operation of circulating schools, which describe at intervals the blank spaces that are placed beyond the reach of stationary schools. In the present situation of the Highlands, both of these methods are putting into operation; and both are entitled to the support and patronage of the public. But without wishing to withdraw a single farthing from the latter of these methods, no one will deny that the former, if it could be put into operation, is the most effectual, for the full and regular education of the Highlanders. A fixed school, operating at all seasons, will do more for its neighbourhood, than can be done by a moveable apparatus set up only at intervals, and transferring itself at the end of a few months to other scenes, and to other neighbourhoods. Let us aim, therefore, at the multiplication of the fixed points; but a mighty sum will be necessary before such a system is completed; and in the mean time, let not the population of the intermediate spaces be abandoned. Let the cheapest and readiest expedient that offers for their education be adopted, and let the public hold forth a liberal hand to the society for circulating schools. But what is to hinder us to combine with this, the gradual extension of the system of fixed and regular education? The parochial schools furnish us with so many fixed points. The Society I am now pleading for, furnish us so many more. The very existence of the Gaelic Society, is a proof, both of the extent and multiplicity of those intermediate spaces, over which they are operating with so much efficiency. Now the precise ground upon which we lay claim to the support of the public, is, that we want to scatter a few more stationary schools, over these intermediate spaces—not to supersede the labours of the other Society; nor the period of time at which this can be possibly accomplished, is still at an indefinite distance from us—but by nar-

I pass over the attempts of our Society to introduce the knowledge of the arts and the habits of useful industry amongst them. I have not room for every thing. And to reclaim, if possible, the prejudices of those who I fear have little sympathy with the wants of the ever-during soul, I have been lingering all the while upon the inferior ground of temporal advantage. But I may detain you for hours upon this ground; and after all I have said

rowing the ground of their operation, to enable them to do more complete justice to the mighty remainder, on which they have every prospect of expatiating for years and generations to come; to make the task more commensurate to their means, and enable them to circulate with greater frequency and effect over those remoter tracts, which we have as yet no immediate prospect of reaching.

Who would not give all jealousy to the wind, when they see how beautifully suited the operations of these two distinct Societies are to one another? Circulate, with all possible activity, among the interjacent spaces on the one hand; but do not give up the prospect of permanent establishments in these spaces on the other. The last is the province of our Society, and is advanced as our distinct claim upon the generosity of the public. We lay claim to this generosity; and, what is more, we stand in need of it. It is not true that we do not teach Gaelic to our Highland scholars. The instructions given to every schoolmaster, and the Reports of the Committees of Presbyteries, upon the examination of the scholars, form a distinct refutation to the impression which has got abroad upon this subject. Strange that that Society should be charged with a hostility to Gaelic education, to whose exertion and whose patronage the Highlands of Scotland are indebted for the existence of the Gaelic Bible. On the other hand, it is not true that our funds are so ample as to make us independant of any appeals that can be made to the generosity of the public. Our expenditure is at this moment pressing upon our resources. We have done much. There are hundreds of schools regularly supported by us, but we appeal to the very existence of other societies for the fact that we have still much to do. We appeal to the press of applications for more schools, and more schoolmasters, and more salaries. These applications come upon us every year, and the painful necessity we are under of refusing many of them, proves to a demonstration, that the want of pecuniary aid is the only limit to the usefulness of our exertions.

about a more peaceful neighbourhood, and a more civilized peasantry, I may positively have said nothing upon the essential merits of the cause. I can conceive the wish of his present Majesty, that every one in his dominions may be able to read the Bible,—to meet an echo in every bosom. But why? Because the very habit of reading implies a more intelligent people;—and must stand associated in every mind with habits of order, and comfort, and decency. But separate these from the religious principle, and what are they? At the very best, they are the virtues of a life. Their office is to scatter a few fleeting joys over a short and uncertain pilgrimage; and to deck a temporary scene with blessings, which are to perish and be forgotten. No! in our attempts to carry into effect the principle of being all things to all men, let us never exalt that which is subordinate; let us never give up our reckoning upon eternity—or be ashamed to own it as our sentiment, that, though schools were to multiply, though missionaries were to labour and all the decencies and accomplishments of social life were to follow in their train—the great object would still be unattained, so long as the things of the Holy Spirit were unrelished and undiscerned amongst them, and they wanted that knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ, which is life everlasting. This is the ground upon which every Christian will rest the vindication of every Missionary enterprise: And this is the ground upon which he may expect to be abandoned by the infidel, who laughs at piety; or the lukewarm believer, who dreads to be laughed at for the extra-

vagance to which he carries it. The Christian is not for giving up the social virtues; but the open enemy and the cold friend of the gospel are for giving up piety: And while they garnish all that is right and amiable in humanity, with the unsubstantial praises of their eloquence, they pour contempt upon that very principle which forms our best security for the existence of virtue in the world. We say nothing that can degrade the social virtues in the estimation of men; but, by making them part of religion, we exalt them above all that poet or moralist can do for them. We give them God for their object, and for their end the grandeur of eternity. No! it is not the Christian who is the enemy of social virtue; it is he who sighs in all the ecstacy of sentiment over it, at the very time that he is digging away its foundation, and wreaking on that piety which is its principle the cruelty of his scorn.

It is very well in its place to urge the civilizing influence of a Missionary Society. But this is not the main object of such an institution. It is not the end. It is only the accompaniment. It is a never-failing collateral, and may be used as a lawful instrument in fighting the battles of the Missionary cause. It is right enough to hold contest with our enemies at every one point of advantage; and for this purpose to descend, if necessary, to the very ground on which they have posted themselves, But, when so engaged, let us never forget the main elements of our business; for there is a danger, that—when turning the eye of our antagonists to the lovely picture of peace, and industry, and cul-

tivation, raised by many a Christian missionary, among the wilds of heathenism—we turn it away from the very marrow and substance of our undertaking; the great aim of which is to preach Christ to sinners, and to rear human souls to a beauteous and never-fading immortality.

The wish of our pious and patriotic king, that every man in his dominions might be able to read the Bible, has circulated through the land. It has been commented upon with eloquence; and we doubt not, that something like the glow of a virtuous sensibility has been awakened by it. But let us never forget, that in the breasts of many, all this may be little better than a mere theatrical emotion. Give me the man who is in the daily habit of opening his Bible, who willingly puts himself into the attitude of a little child when he reads it, and casts an unshrinking eye over its information and its testimony. This is the way of giving an effect and consistency to their boasted admiration of the royal sentiment. The mere admiration in itself indicates nothing. It may be as little connected with the sturdiness of principle as the finery of any poetical delusion. Oh! it is easy to combine a vague and general testimony to the Bible, with a disgusted feeling of antipathy to the methodism of its actual contents; and thousands can profess to make it their rallying point, who pour contempt upon its doctrines, and give the lie to the faithfulness of its sayings.

Let us put you to the trial. The Bible tells us, that "he who believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." It calls upon us "to preach the gospel to every

creature," that every creature may believe it; for he who so "believeth shall not perish, but have everlasting life." Such is the mighty difference between believing and not believing. It makes all the difference between hell and heaven. He who believeth, hath passed from death even unto life; and the errand of the missionary is to carry these overtures to the men of all languages, and all countries, that he may prevail upon them to make this transition. Some reject his overtures, and to them the gospel is the savour of death unto death. Others embrace them, and to them the gospel is the savour of life unto life. Whatever be his reception, he counts it his duty and his business to preach the gospel; and if he get some to hear, and others to forbear, he just fares as the apostles did before him. Now, my brethren, have we got among the substantial realities of the Missionary cause. We have carried you forward from the accessaries to the radical elements of the business; and if you, offended at the hardness of these sayings, feel as if now we had got within the confines of methodism —then know that this feeling arose in your minds at the very moment that we got within the four corners of the Bible; and your fancied admiration of this book, however exquisitely felt or eloquently uttered, is nothing better than the wretched flummery of a sickly and deceitful imagination.

Our venerable Society has given the sanction of her example to the best and the dearest objects of missionaries. Like others she has kept a wakeful eye over all that could contribute to the interest of the species. She has given encouragement to

art and to industry; but she has never been diverted from the religion of the people, as the chief aim of all her undertakings. To this end she has multiplied schools, and made the reading of the Scriptures the main acquirement, of her scholars. The Bible is her school-book, and it is to her that the Highlands of Scotland owe the translation of the Sacred Record into their own tongue. She sends preachers as well as teachers amongst them. As she has made the reading of the Word a practicable acquirement, so she has made the hearing of the Word an accessible privilege. In short, she has set up what may be called a Christian apparatus in many districts, which the legislature of the country had left unprovided for. She is filling up the blanks which, among the scattered and extended parishes of the North, occur so frequently over the broad surface of a thinly-peopled country. She has come in contact with those remoter groupes and hamlets, which the influence of the Establishment did not reach. And she has multiplied her endowments at such a rate—that very many people have got Christian instruction in its different branches as nearly, and as effectively to bear upon them, as in the more favoured districts of the land.

When a wealthy native of a Highland parish, penetrated with a feeling of the wants of his neighbours, erects a chapel, or endows a seminary among them, his benevolence is felt and acknowledged by all; and I am not aware of a single association which can disturb our moral estimate of such a proceeding, or restrain the fulness of that testimony

which is due to it. But should an individual, at a distance from the parish in question, do the same thing; should he, with no natural claim upon him, and without the stimulus of any of those affections, which the mere circumstance of vicinity is fitted to inspire; should he, I say, merely upon a moving representation of their necessities, devote his wealth to the same cause; what influence ought this to have upon our estimate of his character? Why, in all fairness, it should just lead us to infer a stronger degree of the principle of philanthropy—a principle which in his case was unaided by any local influence whatever; and which urged him to exertion and to sacrifice, in the face of an obstacle which the other had not to contend with—the obstacle of distance. Now what one individual may be conceived to do for one parish, a number of individuals may do for a number of parishes. They may form into a Society; and combine their energies and their means for the benefit of the whole country; and, should that country lie at a distance, the only way in which it affects our estimate of their exertions—is by leading us to see in them a stronger principle of attachment to the species; and a more determined zeal for the object of their benevolence, in spite of the additional difficulties with which it is encumbered.

Now the principle does not stop here. In the instance before us, it has been carried from the metropolis of Scotland to the distance of her northern extremities. But tell me, why it might not be carried round the globe. This very Society has carried it over the Atlantic; and the very ap-

paratus which she has planted in the Highlands and Islands of our own country, she has set agoing more than once in the wilds of America. The very discipline which she has applied to her own population, she has brought to bear on human beings in other quarters of the world. She has wrought with the same instruments upon the same materials; and, as in sound philosophy it ought to have been expected, she has obtained the same result—a Christian people rejoicing in the faith of Jesus; and ripening for Heaven, by a daily progress upon earth, in the graces and accomplishments of the gospel. I have yet to learn what that is which should make the same teaching and the same Bible, applicable to one part of the species, and not applicable to another. I am not aware of a single principle in the philosophy of man which points to such a distinction; nor do I know a single category in the science of human nature, which can assist me in drawing the land-mark between those to whom Christianity may be given, and those who are unworthy or unfit for the participation of its blessings. I have been among illiterate peasantry; and I have marked how apt they were in their narrow field of observation, to cherish a kind of malignant contempt for the men of another shire, or another country. I have heard of barbarians, and of their insolent disdain for foreigners. I have read of Jews, and of their unsocial and excluding prejudices. But I always looked upon these as the jealousies of ignorance, which science and observation had the effect of doing away; and that the accomplished traveller, liberalised by frequent intercourse with the men

of other countries, saw through the vanity of all these prejudices and disowned them. Now what the man of liberal philosophy is in sentiment, the missionary is in practice. He sees in every man a partaker of his own nature, and a brother of his own species. He contemplates the human mind in the generality of its great elements. He enters upon the wide field of benevolence; and disdains those geographical barriers, by which little men would shut out one-half of the species from the kind offices of the other. His business is with man; and, let his localities be what they may, enough for his large and noble heart, that he is bone of the same bone. To get at him, he will shun no danger, he will shrink from no privation, he will spare himself no fatigue, he will brave every element of heaven, he will hazard the extremities of every clime, he will cross seas, and work his persevering way through the briers and thickets of the wilderness. In perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by the heathen, in weariness and painfulness, he seeks after him. The cast and the colour are nothing to the comprehensive eye of a missionary. His is the broad principle of good-will to the children of men. His doings are with the species; and overlooking all the accidents of climate or of country, enough for him, if the individual he is in quest of be a man—a brother of the same nature—with a body which a few years will bring to the grave, and a spirit that returns to the God who gave it.

But this man of large and liberal principles is a missionary; and this is enough to put to flight all

admiration of him, and of his doings. I forbear to expatiate; but sure I am that certain philosophers of the day, and certain fanatics of the day, should be made to change places; if those only are the genuine philosophers who keep to principles in spite of names, and those only the genuine fanatics who are ruled by names instead of principles.

The Society for Propagating Christian Knowledge in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland, has every claim upon a religious public; and I trust that those claims will not be forgotten among the multiplicity of laudable and important objects, which are now afloat in this age of benevolent enterprise. She has all the experience and respectability and tried usefulness of age; may she have none of the infirmities of age. May she have nothing either of the rust or the indolence of an establishment about her. Resting on the consciousness of her own righteous and strongly-supported cause, may she look on the operations of other societies with complacency, and be jealous of none of them. She confers with them upon their common objects; she assists them with her experience: And when struggling with difficulties, they make their appeal to the generosity of the Christian world, she nobly leads the way; and imparts to them, with liberal hand, out of her own revenue. She has conferred lasting obligations upon the Missionary cause. She spreads over it the shelter of her venerable name; and by the answer of "Come and see," to those who ask if any good thing can come out of it, she gives a practical refutation to the reasonings of all its adversaries.

She redeems the best of causes from the unmerited contempt under which it labours, and she will be repaid. The religious public will not be backward to own the obligation. We are aware of the prevalence of the Missionary spirit, and of the many useful directions in which it is now operating. But we are not afraid of the public being carried away from us. We know that there is room for all, that there are funds for all; and our policy is not to repress, but to excite the Missionary spirit, and then there will be a heart for all.

ON CRUELTY TO ANIMALS.

A

SERMON,

PREACHED IN EDINBURGH,

ON THE

5TH OF MARCH, 1826.

SERMON VIII.

ON CRUELTY TO ANIMALS.

"A righteous man regardeth the life of his beast."—
PROVERBS xii. 10.

THE word regard is of two-fold signification, and may either apply to the moral or to the intellectual part of our nature. In the one application, the intellectual, it is the regard of attention. In the other, the moral, it is the regard of sympathy, or kindness. We do not marvel at this common term having been applied to two different things; for, in truth, they are most intimately associated; and the faculty by which a transition is accomplished from the one to the other, may be considered as the intermediate link between the mind and the heart. It is the faculty by which certain objects become present to the mind; and then the emotions are awakened in the heart, which correspond to these objects. The two act and re-act upon each other. But, as we must not dwell too long on generalities, we shall satisfy ourselves with stating—that, as, on the one hand, if the heart be very alive to any peculiar set of emotions, this of itself is a predisposing cause why the mind should be very alert in singling out the peculiar objects which excite them; so, on the other hand, that the emotions be specifically felt, the objects must be specifically noticed·

and thus it is, that the faculty of attention—a faculty at the bidding of the will, and for the exercise of which, therefore, man is responsible—is of such mighty and commanding influence upon the sensibilities of our nature; insomuch that, if the regard of attention could be fastened strongly and *singly* on the pain of a suffering creature as its object, we believe that no other emotion than the regard of sympathy or compassion would in any instance be awakened by it.

So much is this indeed the case—so sure is this alliance between the mind simply noticing the distress of a sentient creature, and the heart being sympathetically affected by it, that Nature seems to have limited and circumscribed our power of noticing, and just for the purpose of shielding us from the pain of too pungent, or too incessant a sympathy. And, accordingly, one of the exquisite adaptations in the mechanism of the human frame may be observed in the very imperfection of the human faculties. The most frequently adduced example of this, is the limited power of that organ which is the instrument of vision. The imagination is, that, did man look out upon nature with microscopic eye, so that many of those wonders which now lie hid in deep obscurity should henceforth start into open revelation, and be hourly and habitually obtruded upon his gaze, then, with his present sensibilities exposed to the torture and the disturbance of a perpetual and most agonizing offence from all possible quarters of contemplation, he would be utterly incapacitated for the movements of familiar and ordinary life. Did he actually

see, for example, in the beverage which he carried to his lips, that teeming multitude of sentient and susceptible creatures wherewith it is pervaded: or if it were alike palpable to his senses, that, by the crush of every footstep, he inflicted upon thousands the pangs of dissolution, then it is apprehended that, to man as he is, the world would be insupportable. For, beside the irritation of that sore and incessant disgust from which the power of escaping was denied to him, there would be another, and a most intense suffering, in the constantly aggrieved tenderness of his nature. Or, if, by the operation of habit, all these sensibilities were blunted, and he could behold unmoved the ruin and the wretchedness that he strewed along his path, then he might attain to comfort in the midst of this surrounding annoyance; but what would become of character in the utter extinction of all the delicacies and the feelings which wont to adorn it? Such a change in his physical, could only be adjusted to his happiness, by a reverse and most melancholy change in the moral constitution of his nature. The fineness of his bodily perceptions would need to be compensated by a proportional hardness in the temperament of his soul. With his now finer sensations, there behoved to be duller and coarser sensibilities; and to assort that eye, whose retina had become tenfold more soft and susceptible than before, its owner must be furnished with a heart of tenfold rigidity, and a nervous system impregnable as iron,—that he might walk forth in ease and in complacency, while the conscious destroyer of millions by his tread, or the conscious

devourer of a whole living and suffering hecatomb with every morsel of the sustenance which upheld him.

But, for the purpose of a nice and delicate balance between the actual feelings and faculties of our nature, something more is necessary than the imperfection of our outward senses. The bluntness of man's visual organs serves, no doubt, as a screen of protection against both the nausea and the horror of those many spectacles, which would else have either distressed or deteriorated the sensibilities that belong to him. But then, by help of the microscope, this screen can be occasionally lifted up; and what the eye then saw, the memory might retain, and the imagination might dwell upon, and the associating faculty might both constantly and vividly suggest; and thus, even in the absence of every provocative from without, the heart might be subjected either to a perpetual agitation, or a perpetual annoyance, by the meddling importunity of certain powers and activities which are within. It is not therefore an adequate defence of our species, against a very sore and hurtful molestation, that there should be a certain physical incapacity in our senses. There must, furthermore, be a certain physical inertness in our reflective faculties. In virtue of the former it is, that so many painful or disgusting objects are kept out of sight. But it seems indispensable to our happy or even tolerable existence, that, in virtue of the latter, these objects, when out of sight, should be also out of mind. In the one way, they lose their power to offend as objects of outward observation. In the other way, their power to haunt

and to harass by means of inward reflection, is also taken away. For the first purpose, Nature has struck with a certain impotency the organs of our material framework. For the second, she has infused, as it were, an opiate into the recesses of our mental economy; and made it of sufficient strength and sedative virtue for the needful tranquillity of man, and for upholding that average enjoyment in the midst both of agony and of loathsomeness, which either senses more acute, or a spirit more wakeful, must have effectually dissipated. It is to some such provision too, we think, that much of the heart's purity, as well as much of its tenderness is owing; and it is well that the thoughts of the spirit should be kept, though even by the weight of its own lethargy, from too busy converse with objects which are alike offensive or alike hazardous to both.

It is more properly with the second of these adaptations than the first, that our argument has to do—with the inertness of our reflective faculties, rather than with the incapacity of our senses. It is in behalf of animals, and not of animalculæ, that we are called upon to address you—not of that countless swarm, the agonies of whose destruction are shrouded from observation by the vail upon the sight; but of those creatures who move on the face of the open perspective before us, and not as the others in a region of invisibles, and yet whose dying agonies are shrouded almost as darkly and as densely from general observation, by the vail upon the mind. For you will perceive, that in reference to the latter vail, and by which it is that what is

out of sight is also out of mind, its purpose is accomplished, whether the objects which are disguised by it be without the sphere of actual vision, or beneath the surface of possible vision. Now, it is without the sphere of your actual, although not beneath the surface of your possible vision, where are transacted the dreadful mysteries of a slaughter-house; and more especially those lingering deaths which many an animal has to undergo for the gratifications of a refined epicurism. It were surely most desirable that the duties, if they may be so called, of a most revolting trade, were all of them got over with the least possible expense of suffering: Nor do we ever feel so painfully the impression of a lurking cannibalism in our nature, as when we think of the intense study which has been given to the connection between modes of killing; and the flavour or delicacy of those viands, which are served up to the mild and pacific and gentle-looking creatures, who form the grace and the ornament of our polished society. One is almost tempted, after all, to look upon them as so many savages in disguise; and so, in truth, we should, but for the strength of that opiate whose power and whose property we have just endeavoured to explain; and in virtue of which, the guests of an entertainment are all the while most profoundly unconscious of the horrors of that preparatory scene which went before it. It is not, therefore, that there is hypocrisy in these smiles wherewith they look so benignly to each other. It is not that there is deceit in their words or their accents of tenderness. The truth is, that one shriek of agony, if heard from without, would cast

most oppressive gloom over this scene of conviviality; and the sight, but for a moment, of one wretched creature quivering towards death, would, with Gorgon spell, dissipate all the gaieties which enlivened it. But Nature, as it were, hath practised most subtle *reticence*, both on the senses and the spirit of us her children; or rather, the Author of Nature hath, by the skill of his master hand, instituted the harmony of a most exquisite balance between the tenderness of the human feelings and the listlessness of the human faculties,—so as that, in the mysterious economy under which we live, He may at once provide for the sustenance, and leave entire the moral sensibilities of our species.

But there is a still more wondrous limitation than this, wherewith He hath bounded and beset the faculties of the human spirit. You already understand how it is, that the sufferings of the lower animals may, when out of sight, be out of mind. But more than this, these sufferings may be in sight, and yet out of mind. This is strikingly exemplified in the sports of the field, in the midst of whose varied and animating bustle, that cruelty which all along is present to the senses, may not, for one moment, have been present to the thoughts. There sits a somewhat ancestral dignity and glory on this favourite pastime of joyous old England; when the gallant knighthood, and the hearty yeomen, and the amateurs or virtuosos of the chase, and the full assembled jockeyship of half a province, muster together in all the pride and pageantry of their great emprise; and the panorama of some noble landscape, lighted up with autumnal clearness from

an unclouded heaven, pours fresh exhilaration into every blithe and choice spirit of the scene; and every adventurous heart is braced, and impatient for the hazards of the coming enterprise; and even the high-breathed coursers catch the general sympathy, and seem to fret in all the restiveness of their yet checked and irritated fire, till the echoing horn shall set them at liberty—even that horn which is the knell of death to some trembling victim, now brought forth of its lurking-place to the delighted gaze, and borne down upon with the full and open cry of its ruthless pursuers. Be assured, that, amid the whole glee and fervency of this tumultuous enjoyment, there might not, in one single bosom, be aught so fiendish as a principle of naked and abstract cruelty. The fear which gives its lightning-speed to the unhappy animal; the thickening horrors which, in the progress of exhaustion, must gather upon its flight; its gradually sinking energies, and, at length, the terrible certainty of that destruction which is awaiting it; that piteous cry, which the ear can sometimes distinguish amid the deafening clamour of the blood-hounds, as they spring exultingly upon their prey; the dread massacre and dying agonies of a creature so miserably torn;—all this weight of suffering, we admit, is not once sympathized with; but it is just because the suffering itself is not once thought of. It touches not the sensibilities of the heart; but just because it is never present to the notice of the mind. We allow that the hardy followers in the wild romance of this occupation, we allow them to be reckless of pain; but this is not rejoicing in pain. Theirs

is not the delight of savage, but the apathy of unreflecting creatures. They are wholly occupied with the chase itself, and its spirit-stirring accompaniments; nor bestow one moment's thought on the dread violence of that infliction upon sentient nature which marks its termination. It is the spirit of the competition, and it alone, which goads onward this hurrying career; and even he, who, in at the death, is foremost in the triumph—although to him the death itself is in sight, the agony of its wretched sufferer is wholly out of mind.

We are inclined to carry this principle much farther. We are not even sure, if, within the whole compass of humanity, fallen as it is, there be such a thing as delight in suffering, for its own sake. But, without hazarding a controversy on this, we hold it enough for every practical object, that much, and perhaps the whole of this world's cruelty, arises not from the enjoyment that is felt in consequence of other's pain, but from the enjoyment that is felt in spite of it. It is something else in the spectacle of agony which ministers pleasure than the agony itself; and many is the eye which glistens with transport at the fray of animals met together for their mutual destruction, and which might be brought to weep, if, apart from all the excitements of such a scene, the anguish of wounded or dying creatures were placed nakedly before it. Were it strictly analyzed, it would be found that the charm neither of the ancient gladiatorships, nor of our modern prize-fights, lies in the torture which is thereby inflicted; for we should feel the very same charm, and look with the very same intentness, on

some doubtful, yet strenuous collision, even among the inanimate elements of nature—as, when the water and the fire contended for mastery, and the inherent force of the one was met by a plying and a powerful enginery that gave impulse and direction to the other. It is even so, when the enginery of bones and of muscles comes into rivalship; and every spectator of the ring fastens on the spectacle with that identical engrossment which he feels in the hazards of some doubtful game, or in the desperate conflict and effervescence even of the altogether mute unconscious elements. To him it is little else than a problem in dynamics. There is a science connected with the fight, which has displaced the sensibilities that are connected with its expiring moans, its piteous and piercing outcries, its cruel lacerations. In all this, we admit the utter heedlessness of pain; but we are not sure if even yet there be aught so hellishly revolting as any positive gratification in the pain itself—or whether, even in the lowest walks of blackguardism in society, it do not also hold, that when sufferings even unto death are fully in sight, the pain of these sufferings is as fully out of mind.

But the term science, so strangely applied as it has been in the example now quoted, reminds us of another variety in this most afflicting detail. Even in the purely academic walk we read or hear of the most appalling cruelties; and the interest of that philosophy wherewith they have been associated, has been pled in mitigation of them. And just as the moral debasement incurred by an act of theft is somewhat redeemed, if done by one of

Science's enamoured worshippers, when, overcome by the mere passion of connoisseurship, he puts forth his hand on some choice specimen of most tempting and irresistible peculiarity—even so has a like indulgence been extended to certain perpetrators of stoutest and most resolved cruelty; and that just because of the halo wherewith the glories of intellect and of proud discovery have enshrined them. And thus it is, that, bent on the scrutiny of nature's laws, there are some of our race who have hardihood enough to explore and elicit them at the expense of dreadest suffering—who can make some quaking, some quivering animal, the subject of their hapless experiment—who can institute a questionary process by which to draw out the secrets of its constitution, and, like inquisitors of old, extract every reply by an instrument of torture—who can probe their unfaltering way among the vitalities of a system which shrinks, and palpitates, and gives forth, at every movement of their steadfast hand, the pulsations of deepest agony; and all, perhaps, to ascertain and to classify the phenomena of sensation, or to measure the tenacity of animal life, by the power and exquisiteness of animal endurance. And still, it is not because of all this wretchedness, but in spite of it, that they pursue their barbarous occupation. Even here it is possible, that there is nought so absolutely Satanic as delight in those sufferings of which themselves are the inflicters. That law of emotion by which the sight of pain calls forth sympathy, may not be reversed into an opposite law, by which the sight of pain would call forth satisfaction or pleasure. The

emotion is not reversed—it is only overborne, in the play of other emotions, called forth by other objects. He is intent on the science of those phenomena which he investigates, and bethinks not himself of the suffering which they involve to the unhappy animal. So far from the sympathies of his nature being reversed, or even annihilated, there is in most cases an effort, and of great strenuousness, to keep them down; and his heart is differently affected from that of other men, just because the regards of his mental eye are differently pointed from those of other men. The whole bent and engagement of his faculties are similar to those of another operator who is busied with the treatment of a piece of inanimate matter, and may almost be said to subject it to the torture, when he puts it in the intensely-heated crucible, or applies to it the tests, and the various searching operations of a laboratory. The one watches every change of hue in the substance upon which he operates, and waits for the response which is given forth by a spark, or an effervescence, or an explosion; and the other, precisely similar to him, watches every change of aspect in the suffering or dying creature that is before him, and marks every symptom of its exhaustion, or sorer distress, every throb of renewed anguish, every cry, and every look of that pain which it can feel, though not articulate; marks and considers these in no other light than as the exponents of its variously-affected physiology. But still, could merely the same interesting phenomena have been evolved without pain, he would like it better. Only, he will not be repelled from

the study of them by pain. Even he would have had more comfort in the study of a complex automaton, that gave out the same results on the same application. Only, he will not shrink from the necessary incisions, and openings, and separation of parts, although, instead of a lifeless automaton, it should be a sentient and sorely-agonized animal. So that there is not even with him any reversal of the law of sympathy. There may be the feebleness, or there may be the negation of it. Certain it is, that it has given way to other laws of superior force in his constitution. And, without imputing to him aught so monstrous as the positive love of suffering, we may even admit for him a hatred of suffering, but that the love of science had overborne it.

In the views that we have now given, and which we deem of advantage for the right practical treatment of our question, it may be conceived that we palliate the atrociousness of cruelty. It is forgotten, that a charge of foullest delinquency may be made up altogether of wants or of negatives; and, just as the human face, by the mere want of some of its features, although there should not be any inversion of them, might be an object of utter loathsomeness to beholders, so the human character, by the mere absence of certain habits, or certain sensibilities, which belong ordinarily and constitutionally to our species, may be an object of utter abomination in society. The want of natural affection forms one article of the Apostle's indictment against our world; and certain it is, that the total want of it were stigma enough for the designation

of a monster. The mere want of religion, or irreligion, is enough to make man an outcast from his God. Even to the most barbarous of our kind you apply, not the term of antihumanity, but of inhumanity—not the term of antisensibility; and you hold it enough for the purpose of branding him for general execration, that you convicted him of complete and total insensibility. He is regaled, it is true, by a spectacle of agony—but not because of the agony. It is something else, therewith associated, which regales him. But still he is rightfully the subject of most emphatic denunciation, not because regaled by, but because regardless of, the the agony. We do not feel ourselves to be vindicating the cruel man, when we affirm it to be not altogether certain, whether he rejoices in the extinction of life; for we count it a deep atrocity, that, unlike to the righteous man of our text, he simply does not regard the life of a beast. You may perhaps have been accustomed to look upon the negatives of character, as making up a sort of neutral or mid-way innocence. But this is a mistake. Unfeeling is but a negative quality; and yet we speak of an unfeeling monster. It is thus that even the profound experimentalist, whose delight is not in the torture which he inflicts, but in the truth which he elicits thereby, may become an object of keenest reprobation; not because he was pleased with suffering, but simply because he did not pity it—not because the object of pain, if dwelt upon by him, would be followed up by any other emotion than that which is experienced by other men; but because, intent on the prosecution of

another object, it was not so dwelt upon. It is found that the *eclat* even of brilliant discovery does not shield him from the execrations of a public, who can yet convict him of nothing more than simply of negatives—of heedlessness, of heartlessness, of looking upon the agonies of a sentient creature without regard, and therefore without sensibility. The true principle of his condemnation is, that he ought to have regarded. It is not that, in virtue of a different organic structure, he feels differently from others, when the same simple object is brought to bear upon him. But it is, that he resolutely kept that object at a distance from his attention, or rather, that he steadily kept his attention away from the object; and that, in opposition to all the weight of remonstrance which lies in the tremors, and the writhings, and the piteous outcries, of agonized Nature. Had we obtained for these the regards of his mind, the relentings of his heart might have followed. His is not an anomalous heart; and the only way in which he can brace it into sternness, is by barricading the avenue which leads to it. That faculty of attention, which might have opened the door, through which suffering without finds its way to sympathy within, is otherwise engaged; and the precise charge, on which either morality can rightfully condemn, or humanity be offended, is, that he wills to have it so.

It may be illustrated by that competition of speed which is held, with busy appliance of whip and of spur, betwixt animals. A similar competition can be imagined between steam-carriages, when, either to preserve the distance which has

been gained, or to recover the distance which has been lost, the respective guides would keep up an incessant appliance to the furnace, and the safety-valve. Now, the sport and the excitement are the same, whether this appliance of force be to a dead or a living mechanism; and the enormity of the latter does not lie in any direct pleasure which is felt in the exhaustion, or the soreness, or, finally, in the death of the over-driven animal. If these awake any feeling at all in the barbarous rider, it is that of pain; and it is either the want or the weakness of this latter feeling, and not the presence of its opposite, which constitutes him a barbarian. He does not rejoice in animal suffering—but it is enough to bring down upon him the charge of barbarity, that he does not regard it.

But these introductory remarks, although they lead, I do think, to some most important suggestions for the management of the evil, yet they serve not to abate its appalling magnitude. Man is the direct agent of a wide and continual distress to the lower animals, and the question is, Can any method be devised for its alleviation? On this subject that scriptural image is strikingly realized, "The whole inferior creation groaning and travailing together in pain," because of him. It signifies not to the substantive amount of the suffering, whether this be prompted by the hardness of his heart, or only permitted through the heedlessness of his mind. In either way it holds true, not only that the arch-devourer man stands pre-eminent over the fiercest children of the wilderness as an animal of prey; but that for his lordly and luxurious appetite, as well as for

his service or merest curiosity and amusement, Nature must be ransacked throughout all her ele ments. Rather than forego the veriest gratifications of vanity, he will wring them from the anguish of wretched and ill-fated creatures; and whether for the indulgence of his barbaric sensuality, or barbaric splendour, can stalk paramount over the sufferings of that prostrate creation which has been placed beneath his feet. That beauteous domain whereof he has been constituted the terrestrial sovereign, gives out so many blissful and benignant aspects; and whether we look to its peaceful lakes, or its flowery landscapes, or its evening skies, or to all that soft attire which overspreads the hills and the valleys, lighted up by smiles of sweetest sunshine, and where animals disport themselves in all the exuberance of gaiety—this surely were a more befitting scene for the rule of clemency, than for the iron rod of a murderous and remorseless tyrant. But the present is a mysterious world wherein we dwell. It still bears much upon its materialism of the impress of Paradise. But a breath from the air of Pandemonium has gone over its living generations. And so "the fear of man, and the dread of man, is now upon every beast of the earth, and upon every fowl of the air, upon all that moveth upon the earth, and upon all the fishes of the sea; into man's hands are they delivered: every moving thing that liveth is meat for him; yea, even as the green herbs, there have been given to him all things." Such is the extent of his jurisdiction, and with most full and wanton license has he revelled among its privileges. The whole earth labours and is in violence

because of his cruelties; and, from the amphitheatre of sentient Nature, there sounds in fancy's ear the bleat of one wide and universal suffering,—a dreadful homage to the power of Nature's constituted lord.

These sufferings are really felt. The beasts of the field are not so many automata without sensation, and just so constructed as to give forth all the natural signs and expressions of it. Nature hath not practised this universal deception upon our species. These poor animals just look, and tremble, and give forth the very indications of suffering that we do. Theirs is the distinct cry of pain. Theirs is the unequivocal physiognomy of pain. They put on the same aspect of terror on the demonstrations of a menaced blow. They exhibit the same distortions of agony after the infliction of it. The bruise, or the burn, or the fracture, or the deep incision, or the fierce encounter with one of equal or superior strength, just affects them similarly to ourselves. Their blood circulates as ours. They have pulsations in various parts of the body like ours. They sicken, and they grow feeble with age; and, finally, they die just as we do. They possess the same feelings; and, what exposes them to like suffering from another quarter, they possess the same instincts with our own species. The lioness robbed of her whelps causes the wilderness to ring aloud with the proclamation of her wrongs; or the bird whose little household has been stolen, fills and saddens all the grove with melodies of deepest pathos. All this is palpable even to the general and unlearned eye; and when the physiologist lays open the recesses of their system by means of that

scalpel, under whose operation they just shrink and are convulsed as any living subject of our own species, there stands forth to view the same sentient apparatus, and furnished with the same conductors for the transmission of feeling to every minutest pore upon the surface. Theirs is unmixed and unmitigated pain—the agonies of martyrdom, without the alleviation of the hopes and the sentiments, whereof they are incapable. When they lay them down to die, their only fellowship is with suffering; for in the prison-house of their beset and bounded faculties, there can no relief be afforded by communion with other interests or other things. The attention does not lighten their distress as it does that of man, by carrying off his spirit from that existing pungency and pressure which might else be overwhelming. There is but room in their mysterious economy for one inmate; and that is, the absorbing sense of their own single and concentrated anguish. And so in that bed of torment, whereon the wounded animal lingers and expires, there is an unexplored depth and intensity of suffering which the poor dumb animal itself cannot tell, and against which it can offer no remonstrance; an untold and unknown amount of wretchedness, of which no articulate voice gives utterance. But there is an eloquence in its silence; and the very shroud which disguises it, only serves to aggravate its horrors.

We now come to the practical treatment of this question—to the right method of which, we hold the views that are now offered to be directly and obviously subservient.

First, then, upon this subject, we should hold

no doubtful casuistry. We should advance no pragmatic or controversial doctrine. We should carefully abstain from all such ambiguous or questionable positions, as the unlawfulness of animal food, or the unlawfulness of animal experiments. We should not even deem it the right tactics for this moral warfare, to take up the position of the unlawfulness of field-sports; or yet the unlawfulness of those competitions, whether of strength or of speed, which at one time on the turf, and at another in the ring, are held forth to the view of assembled spectators. We are aware that some of these positions are not so questionable, yet we should refrain from the elaboration of them; for we hold, that this is not the way by which we shall most effectually make head against the existing cruelties of our land. The moral force by which our cause is to be advanced, does not lie even in the soundest categories of an ethical jurisprudence—and far less in the dogmata of any paltry sectarianism. We have almost as little inclination for the controversy which respects animal food, as we have for the controversy about the eating of blood; and this, we repeat, is not the way by which the claims of the inferior animals are practically to be carried.

To obtain the regards of man's heart in behalf of the lower animals, we should strive to draw the regards of his mind towards them. We should avail ourselves of the close alliance that obtains between the regards of his attention, and those of his sympathy. For this purpose, we should importunately ply him with the objects of suffering, and thus call up its respondent emotion of sym-

pathy—that among the other objects which have hitherto engrossed his attention, and the other desires or emotions which have hitherto lorded it over the compassion of his nature and overpowered it; this last may at length be restored to its legitimate play, and reinstated in all its legitimate pre-eminence over the other affections or appetites which belong to him. It affords a hopeful view of our cause, that so much can be done by the mere obtrusive presentation of the object to the notice of society. It is a comfort to know, that, in this benevolent warfare, we have to make head, not so much against the cruelty of the public, as against the heedlessness of the public; that to hold forth a right view, is the way to call forth a right sensibility; and, that to assail the seat of any emotion, our likeliest process is to make constant and conspicuous exhibition of the object which is fitted to awaken it. Our text, taken from the profoundest book of experimental wisdom in the world, keeps clear of every questionable or casuistical dogma; and rests the whole cause of the inferior animals on one moral element, which is, in respect of principle; and on one practical method, which is, in respect of efficacy, unquestionable: "A righteous man regardeth the life of his beast." Let a man be but righteous in the general and obvious sense of the word, and let the regard of his attention be but directed to the case of the inferior animals, and then the regard of his sympathy will be awakened to the full extent at which it is either duteous or desirable. Still it may be asked, to what extent will the duty go? and our reply is, that we had rather push the duty

forward, than be called upon to define the extreme termination of it. Yet we do not hesitate to say, that we foresee not aught so very extreme as the abolition of animal food; but we do foresee the indefinite abridgment of all that cruelty which subserves the gratifications of a base and selfish epicurism. We think that a Christian and humanized society will at length lift their prevalent voice, for the least possible expense of suffering to all the victims of a necessary slaughter—for a business of utmost horror being also a business of utmost despatch—for the blow, in short, of an instant extermination, that not one moment might elapse between a state of pleasurable existence and a state of profound unconsciousness. Again, we do not foresee, but with the perfecting of the two sciences of anatomy and physiology, the abolition of animal experiments; but we do foresee a gradual, and, at length, a complete abandonment of the experiments of illustration, which are at present a thousand-fold more numerous than the experiments of humane discovery. As to field-sports, we, for the present, abstain from all prophecy, in regard, either to their growing disuse, or to the conclusive extinction of them. We are quite sure, in the mean time, that casuistry upon this subject would be altogether powerless; and nothing could be imagined more keenly, or more energetically contemptuous, than the impatient—the impetuous disdain, wherewith the enamoured votaries of this gay and glorious adventure would listen to any demonstration of its unlawfulness. We shall therefore make no attempt to dogmatise them out of that fond and favourite

amusement which they prosecute with all the intensity of a passion. It is not thus that the fascination will be dissipated. And, therefore, for the present, we should be inclined to subject the lovers of the chase, and the lovers of the prize-fight, to the same treatment, even as there exists between them, we are afraid, the affinity of a certain common or kindred character. There is, we have often thought, a kind of professional cast, a family likeness, by which the devotees of game, and of all sorts of stirring or hazardous enterprise, admit of being recognized; the hue of a certain assimilating quality, although of various gradations, from the noted champions of the hunt, to the noted champions of the ring or of the racing-course; a certain dash of moral outlawry, if I may use the expression, among all these children of high and heated adventure, that bespeaks them a distinct class in society,—a set of wild and way-ward humorists, who have broken them loose from the dull regularities of life, and formed themselves into so many trusty and sworn brotherhoods, wholly given over to frolic, and excitement, and excess, in all their varieties. They compose a separate and outstanding public among themselves, nearly arrayed in the same picturesque habiliments—bearing most distinctly upon their countenance the same air of recklessness and hardihood—admiring the same feats of dexterity or danger—indulging the same tastes, even to their very literature—members of the same sporting society—readers of the same sporting magazine, whose strange medley of anecdotes gives impressive exhibition of that one and pervading

characteristic for which we are contending; anecdotes of the chase, and anecdotes of the high-breathed or bloody contest, and anecdotes of the gaming-table, and lastly anecdotes of the high-way. We do not just affirm a precise identity between all the specimens or species in this very peculiar department of moral history. But, to borrow a phrase from natural history, we affirm, that there are transition processes, by which the one melts, and demoralizes, and graduates insensibly into the other. What we have now to do with, is the cruelty of their respective entertainments—a cruelty, however, upon which we could not assert, even of the very worst and most worthless among them, that they rejoice in pain, but that they are regardless of pain. It is not by the force of a mere ethical *dictum*, in itself, perhaps, unquestionable, that they will be restrained from their pursuits. But when transformed by the operation of unquestionable principle, into righteous and regardful men, they will spontaneously abandon them. Meanwhile, we try to help forward our cause, by forcing upon general regard, those sufferings which are now so unheeded and unthought of. And we look forward to its final triumph, as one of those results that will historically ensue, in the train of an awakened and a moralized society.

The institution of a yearly sermon against cruelty to animals, is of itself a likely enough expedient, that might at least be of some auxiliary operation, along with other and more general causes, towards such an awakening. It is not by one, but by many successive appeals, that the cause of justice and

mercy to the brute creation will at length be practically carried. On this subject I cannot, within the limits of a single address, pretend to aught like a full or a finished demonstration. This might require not one, but a whole century of sermons; and many therefore are the topics which necessarily I must bequeath to my successors, in this warfare against the listlessness and apathy of the public. And, beside the force and the impression of new topics, if there be any truth in our doctrine, there is a mighty advantage gained upon this subject of all others by the repetition of old topics. It is a subject on which the public do not require so much to be instructed, as to be reminded; to have the regard of their attention directed again and again to the sufferings of poor helpless creatures, that the regard of their sympathy might at length be effectually obtained for them. This then is a cause to which the institution of an anniversary pleading in its favour, is most precisely and peculiarly adapted. And besides, we must confess, in the general, our partiality for a scheme that has originated the Boyle, and the Bampton, and the Warburtonian lectureships of England, with all the valuable authorship which has proceeded from them. An endowment for an annual discourse upon a given theme, is, we believe, a novelty in Scotland; though it is to similar institutions that much of the best sacred and theological literature of our sister country is owing. We should rejoice, if, in this our comparatively meagre and unbeneficed land, both these themes and these endowments were multiplied. We recommend this as a fit species of

charity, for the munificence of wealthy individuals. Whatever their selected argument shall be, whether that of cruelty to animals, or some one evidence of our faith, or the defence and illustration of a doctrine, or any distinct method of Christian philanthropy for the moral regeneration of our species, or aught else of those innumerable topics that lie situated within the rich and ample domain of that revelation which God has made to our world—we feel assured that such a movement must be responded to with beneficial effect, both by the gifted pastors of our Church, and by the aspiring youths of greatest power or greatest promise among its candidates. Such institutions as these would help to quicken the energies of our establishment; and, through means of a sustained and reiterated effort, directed to some one great lesson, whether in theology or morals, they might impress, and that more deeply every year, some specific and most salutary amelioration on the principles or the practices of general society.

Yet we are loath to quit our subject without one appeal more in behalf of those poor sufferers, who, unable to advocate their own cause, possess, on that very account, a more imperative claim on the exertions of him who now stands as their advocate before you.

And first, it may have been felt that, by the way in which we have attempted to resolve cruelty into its elements, we, instead of launching rebuke against it, have only devised a palliation for its gross and shocking enormity. But it is not so. It is true, we count the enormity to lie mainly in the heed-

lessness of pain; but then we charge this foully and flagrantly enormous thing, not on the mere desperadoes and barbarians of our land, but on the men and the women of general, and even of cultivated and high-bred society. Instead of stating cruelty to be what it is not, and then confining the imputation of it to the outcast few, we hold it better, and practically far more important, to state what cruelty really is, and then fasten the imputation of it on the common-place and the companionable many. Those outcasts to whom you would restrict the condemnation, are not at present within the reach of our voice. But you are; and it lies with you to confer a ten-fold greater boon on the inferior creation, than if all barbarous sports, and all bloody experiments were forthwith put an end to. It is at the bidding of your collective will to save those countless myriads who are brought to the regular and the daily slaughter, all the difference between a gradual and an instant death. And there is a practice realised in every-day life, which you can put down,—a practice which strongly reminds us of a ruder age that has long gone by;—when even beauteous and high-born ladies could partake in the dance, and the song, and the festive chivalry of barbaric castles, unmindful of all the piteous and the pining agony of dungeoned prisoners below. We charge a like unmindfulness on the present generation. We know not whether those wretched animals, whose still sentient frameworks are under process of ingenious manufacture for the epicurism or the splendour of your coming entertainment,—we know not whether they are now

dying by inches in your own subterranean keeps, or, through the subdivided industry of our commercial age, are now suffering all the horrors of their protracted agony, in the prison-house of some distant street where this dreadful trade is carried on. But truly it matters nought to our argument, ye heedless sons and daughters of gaiety! We speak not of the daily thousands who have to die that man may live; but of those thousands who have to die more painfully, just that man may live more luxuriously. We speak to you of the art and the mystery of the killing trade—from which it would appear, that not alone the delicacy of the food, but even its appearance, is, among the connoisseurs of a refined epicurism, the matter of skilful and scientific computation. There is a sequence, it would appear—there is a sequence between an exquisite death, and an exquisite or a beautiful preparation of cookery; and just in the ordinary way that art avails herself of the other sequences of philosophy,—the first term is made sure, that the second term might, according to the metaphysic order of causation, follow in its train. And hence we are given to understand, hence the cold-blooded ingenuities of that previous and preparatory torture which oft is undergone, both that man might be feasted with a finer relish, and that the eyes of man might be feasted and regaled with a finer spectacle. The atrocities of a Majendie have been blazoned before the eye of a British public; but this is worse in the fearful extent and magnitude of the evil—truly worse than a thousand Majendies. His is a cruel luxury, but it is the luxury of intellect.

Yours is both a cruel and a sensual luxury; and you have positively nought to plead for it but the most worthless and ignoble appetites of our nature.

But, secondly, and if possible to secure your kindness for our cause, let me, in the act of drawing these lengthened observations to a close, offer to your notice the bright and the beautiful side of it. I would bid you think of all that fond and pleasing imagery, which is associated even with the lower animals, when they become the objects of a benevolent care, which at length ripens into a strong and cherished affection for them—as when the worn-out hunter is permitted to graze, and be still the favourite of all the domestics through the remainder of his life; or the old and shaggy house-dog that has now ceased to be serviceable, is nevertheless sure of its regular meals, and a decent funeral; or when an adopted inmate of the household is claimed as property, or as the object of decided partiality, by some one or other of the children; or, finally, when in the warmth and comfort of the evening fire, one or more of these home animals take their part in the living groupe that is around it, and their very presence serves to complete the picture of a blissful and smiling family. Such relationships with the inferior creatures, supply many of our finest associations of tenderness; and give, even to the heart of man, some of its simplest yet sweetest enjoyments. He even can find in these, some compensation for the dread and the disquietude wherewith his bosom is agitated amid the fiery conflicts of infuriated men. When he retires from the stormy element of debate, and

exchanges, for the vindictive glare, and the hideous discords of that outcry which he encounters among his fellows,—when these are exchanged for the honest welcome and the guileless regards of those creatures who gambol at his feet, he feels that even in the society of the brutes, in whose hearts there is neither care nor controversy, he can surround himself with a better atmosphere far, than that in which he breathes among the companionships of his own species. Here he can rest himself from the fatigues of that moral tempest which has beat upon him so violently; and, in the play of kindliness with these poor irrationals, his spirit can forget for a while all the injustice and ferocity of their boasted lords.

But this is only saying, that our subject is connected with the pleasures of sentiment. And therefore, in the third and last place, we have to offer it as our concluding observation, that it is also connected with the principles of deepest sacredness. It may be thought by some that we have wasted the whole of this Sabbath morn, on what may be ranked among but the lesser moralities of human conduct. But there is one aspect, in which it may be regarded as more profoundly and more peculiarly religious than any one virtue which reciprocates, or is of mutual operation among the fellows of the same species. It is a virtue which oversteps, as it were, the limits of a species, and which, in this instance, prompts a descending movement, on our part, of righteousness and mercy towards those who have an inferior place to ourselves in the scale of creation. The lesson of this day is not the

circulation of benevolence within the limits of one species. It is the transmission of it from one species to another. The first is but the charity of a world. The second is the charity of a universe. Had there been no such charity, no descending current of love and of liberality from species to species, what, I ask, should have become of ourselves? Whence have we learned this attitude of lofty unconcern about the creatures who are beneath us? Not from those ministering spirits who wait upon the heirs of salvation. Not from those angels who circle the throne of heaven, and make all its arches ring with joyful harmony, when but one sinner of this prostrate world turns his footsteps towards them. Not from that mighty and mysterious visitant, who unrobed him of all his glories, and bowed down his head unto the sacrifice; and still, from the seat of his now exalted mediatorship, pours forth his intercessions and his calls in behalf of the race he died for. Finally, not from the eternal Father of all, in the pavilion of whose residence there is the golden treasury of all those bounties and beatitudes that roll over the face of nature; and from the footstool of whose empyreal throne there reaches a golden chain of providence to the very humblest of his family. He who hath given His angels charge concerning us, means that the tide of beneficence should pass from order to order, through all the ranks of His magnificent creation; and we ask, is it with man that this goodly provision is to terminate—or shall he, with all his sensations of present blessedness, and all his visions of future glory let down upon him from above, shall he turn

nim selfishly and scornfully away from the rights of those creatures whom God hath placed in dependence under him? We know that the cause of poor and unfriended animals has many an obstacle to contend with in the difficulties or the delicacies of legislation. But we shall ever deny that it is a theme beneath the dignity of legislation; or that the nobles and the senators of our land stoop to a cause which is degrading, when, in the imitation of heaven's high clemency, they look benignly downward on these humble and helpless sufferers. Ere we can admit this, we must forget the whole economy of our blessed gospel. We must forget the legislations and the cares of the upper sanctuary in behalf of our fallen species. We must forget that the redemption of our world is suspended on an act of jurisprudence which angels desired to look into, and for effectuating which, the earth we tread upon was honoured by the footsteps, not of angel or of archangel, but of God manifest in the flesh. The distance upward between us and that mysterious Being, who let himself down from heaven's high concave upon our lowly platform, surpasses by infinity the distance downward between us and every thing that breathes. And He bowed himself thus far for the purpose of an example, as well as for the purpose of an expiation; that every Christian might extend his compassionate regards over the whole of sentient and suffering nature. The high court of Parliament is not degraded by its attentions and its cares in behalf of inferior creatures—else the Sanctuary of Heaven has been degraded by its councils in behalf of the world we occupy; and, in

the execution of which, the Lord of heaven Himself relinquished the highest seat of glory in the universe, and went forth to sojourn for a time on this outcast and accursed territory.

THE BLESSEDNESS OF CONSIDERING THE CASE OF THE POOR:

A

SERMON,

PREACHED BEFORE

THE SOCIETY

FOR

RELIEF OF THE DESTITUTE SICK,

IN

ST. ANDREW'S CHURCH, EDINBURGH,

ON

SABBATH, APRIL 18, 1813.

SERMON IX.

THE BLESSEDNESS OF CONSIDERING THE CASE OF THE POOR.

"Blessed is he that considereth the poor; the Lord will deliver him in time of trouble."—PSALM xli. 1.

THERE is an evident want of congeniality between the wisdom of this world, and the wisdom of the Christian. The term "wisdom," carries my reverence along with it. It brings before me a grave and respectable character, whose rationality predominates over the inferior principles of his constitution; and to whom I willingly yield that peculiar homage which the enlightened, and the judicious, and the manly, are sure to exact from a surrounding neighbourhood. Now, so long as this wisdom has for its object some secular advantage, I yield it an unqualified reverence. It is a reverence which all understand, and all sympathise with. If, in private life, a man be wise in the management of his farm, or his fortune, or his family; or if, in public life, he have wisdom to steer an empire through all its difficulties, and to carry it to aggrandisement and renown—the respect which I feel for such wisdom as this, is most cordial and entire, and supported by the universal acknowledgment of all whom I call to attend to it.

Let me now suppose that this wisdom has

changed its object—that the man whom I am representing to exemplify this respectable attribute, instead of being wise for time, is wise for eternity—that he labours by the faith and sanctification of the gospel for unperishable honours—that, instead of listening to him with admiration at his sagacity, as he talks of business, or politics, or agriculture, we are compelled to listen to him talking of the hope within the veil, and of Christ being the power of God, and the wisdom of God, unto salvation:—what becomes of your respect for him now? Are there not some of you who are quite sensible that this respect is greatly impaired, since the wisdom of the man has taken so unaccountable a change in its object and in its direction? The truth is, that the greater part of the world feel no respect at all for a wisdom which they do not comprehend. They may love the innocence of a decidedly religious character, but they feel no sublime or commanding sentiment of veneration for its wisdom. All the truth of the Bible, and all the grandeur of eternity, will not redeem it from a certain degree of contempt. Terms which lower, undervalue, and degrade, suggest themselves to the mind; and strongly dispose it to throw a mean and disagreeable colouring over the man, who, sitting loose to the objects of the world, has become altogether a Christian. It is needless to expatiate; but what I have seen myself, and what must have fallen under the observation of many whom I address, carry in them the testimony of experience to the assertion of the apostle, "that the things of the spirit of God are foolishness to the natural man,

neither can he know them, for they are spiritually discerned."

Now, what I have said of the respectable attribute of wisdom, is applicable, with almost no variation, to another attribute of the human character, to which I would assign the gentler epithet of "lovely." The attribute to which I allude, is that of benevolence. This is the burden of every poet's song, and every eloquent and interesting enthusiast gives it his testimony. I speak not of the enthusiasm of methodists and devotees, I speak of that enthusiasm of fine sentiment which embellishes the pages of elegant literature, and is addressed to all her sighing and amiable votaries, in the various forms of novel, and poetry, and dramatic entertainment. You would think if any thing could bring the Christian at one with the world around him, it would be this; and that, in the ardent benevolence which figures in novels, and sparkles in poetry, there would be an entire congeniality with the benevolence of the gospel. I venture to say, however, that there never existed a stronger repulsion between two contending sentiments, than between the benevolence of the Christian, and the benevolence which is the theme of elegant literature—that the one, with all its accompaniments of tears, and sensibilities, and interesting cottages, is neither felt nor understood by the Christian as such; and the other, with its work and its labour of love, its *enduring hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ*, and its living, not to itself, but to the will of Him who died for us, and who rose again, is not only not understood, but positively nauseated, by the poetical *amateur*.

But the contrast does not stop here. The benevolence of the gospel is not only at antipodes with that of the visionary sons and daughters of poetry, but it even varies in some of its most distinguishing features from the experimental benevolence of real and familiar life. The fantastic benevolence of poetry is now indeed pretty well exploded; and, in the more popular works of the age, there is a benevolence of a far truer and more substantial kind substituted in its place—the benevolence which you meet with among men of business and observation—the benevolence which bustles and finds employment among the most public and ordinary scenes; and which seeks for objects, not where the flower blows loveliest, and the stream, with its gentle murmurs, falls sweetest on the ear; but finds them in its every-day walks, goes in quest of them through the heart of the great city, and is not afraid to meet them in its most putrid lanes and loathsome receptacles.

Now, it must be acknowledged, that this benevolence is of a far more respectable kind than that poetic sensibility, which is of no use, because it admits of no application. Yet I am not afraid to say, that, respectable as it is, it does not come up to the benevolence of the Christian; and is at variance, in some of its most capital ingredients, with the morality of the gospel. It is well, and very well as far as it goes; and that Christian is wanting to the will of his Master, who refuses to share and go along with it. The Christian will do all this, but he would like to do more; and it is at the precise point where he proposes to do more, that he finds

himself abandoned by the co-operation and good wishes of those who had hitherto supported him. The Christian goes as far as the votary of this useful benevolence; but then he would like to go further, and this is the point at which he is mortified to find that his old coadjutors refuse to go along with him; and that, instead of being strengthened by their assistance, he has their contempt and their ridicule, or, at all events, their total want of sympathy to contend with. The truth is, that the benevolence I allude to, with all its respectable air of business and good sense, is altogether a secular benevolence. Through all the extent of its operations, it carries in it no reference to the eternal duration of its object. Time, and the accommodations of time, form all its subject, and all its exercise. It labours, and often with success, to provide for its object a warm and a well-sheltered tenement; but it looks not beyond the few little years when the earthly house of this tabernacle shall be dissolved, when the soul shall be driven from its perishable tenement, and the only benevolence it will acknowledge or care for, will be the benevolence of those who have directed it to a building not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. This, then, is the point at which the benevolence of the gospel separates from that worldly benevolence, to which, as far as it goes, I offer my cheerful and unmingled testimony. The one minds earthly things, the other has its conversation in heaven. Even when the immediate object of both is the same, you will generally perceive an evident distinction in the principle. Individuals, for example, may co-operate,

and will often meet in the same room, be members of the same society, and go hand in hand most cordially together for the education of the poor. But the forming habits of virtuous industry, and good members of society, which are the sole consideration in the heart of the worldly philanthropist, are but mere accessaries in the heart of the Christian. The main impulse of his benevolence, lies in furnishing the poor with the means of enjoying that bread of life which came down from heaven, and in introducing them to the knowledge of those Scriptures which are the power of God unto salvation to every one who believeth. Now, it is so far a blessing to the world, that there is a co-operation in the immediate object. But what I contend for, is, that there is a total want of congeniality in the principle; that the moment you strip the institution of its temporal advantages, and make it repose on the naked grandeur of eternity, it is fallen from, or laughed at, as one of the chimeras of fanaticism; and left to the despised efforts of those whom they esteem to be unaccountable people, who subscribe for missions, and squander their money on Bible societies. Strange effect, you would think, of eternity to degrade the object with which it is connected! But so it is. The blaze of glory, which is thrown around the martyrdom of a patriot or a philosopher, is refused to the martyrdom of a Christian. When a statesman dies, who lifted his intrepid voice for the liberty of the species, we hear of nothing but of the shrines and the monuments of immortality. Put into his place one of those sturdy reformers, who, unmoved by councils and

inquisitions, stood up for the religious liberties of the world: and it is no sooner done, than the full tide of congenial sympathy and admiration is at once arrested. We have all heard of the benevolent apostleship of Howard, and what Christian will be behind his fellows with his applauding testimony? But will they, on the other hand, share his enthusiasm, when he tells them of the apostleship of Paul, who, in the sublimer sense of the term, accomplished the liberty of the captive, and brought them that sat in darkness out of the prison-house? Will they share in the holy benevolence of the apostle, when he pours out his ardent effusions in behalf of his countrymen? They were at that time on the eve of the cruellest sufferings. The whole vengeance of the Roman power was mustering to bear upon them. The siege and destruction of their city form one of the most dreadful tragedies in the history of war. Yet Paul seems to have had another object in his eye. It was their souls and their eternity which engrossed him. Can you sympathise with him in this principle; or join in kindred benevolence with him, when he says, that "my heart's desire and prayer for Israel is that they might be saved?"

But, to bring my list of examples to a close, the most remarkable of them all may be collected from the history of the present attempts which are now making to carry the knowledge of divine revelation into the Pagan and uncivilized countries of the world. Now, it may be my ignorance, but I am certainly not aware of the fact—that without a book of religious faith; without religion, in fact, being

the errand and occasion, we have ever been able in modern times so far to compel the attention and to subdue the habits of savages, as to throw in among them the use and the possession of a written language. Certain it is, however, at all events, that this very greatest step in the process of converting a wild man of the woods into a humanized member of society, has been accomplished by Christian missionaries. They have put into the hands of barbarians this mighty instrument of a written language, and they have taught them how to use it.* They have formed an orthography for wandering and untutored savages. They have given a shape and a name to their barbarous articulations; and the children of men, who lived on the prey of the wilderness, are now forming in village schools to the arts and the decencies of cultivated life. Now, I am not involving you in the controversy, whether civilization should precede Christianity, or Christianity should precede civilization. It is not to what has been said on the subject, but to what has been done, that we are pointing your attention. We appeal to the fact; and as an illustration of the principle we have been attempting to lay before you, we call upon you to mark the feelings, and the countenance, and the language,

* As, for instance, Mr John Elliot, and the Moravian brethren among the Indians of New England and Pennsylvania; the Moravians in South America; Mr Hans Egede, and the Moravians in Greenland; the latter in Labrador, among the Esquimaux; the Missionaries in Otaheite, and other South Sea islands; and Mr Brunton, under the patronage of the Society for Missions to Africa and the East, who reduced the language of the Susoos, a nation on the coast of Africa, to writing and grammatical form, and printed in it a spelling-book, vocabulary, catechism, and some tracts. Other instances besides might be given.

of the mere academic moralist, when you put into his hand the authentic and proper document where the fact is recorded—we mean a missionary report, or a missionary magazine. We know that there are men who have so much of the firm nerve and hardihood of philosophy about them, as not to be repelled from truth in whatever shape, or from whatever quarter, it comes to them. But there are others of a humbler cast, who have transferred their homage from the omnipotence of truth, to the omnipotence of a name; who, because missionaries, while they are accomplishing the civilization are labouring also for the eternity of savages, have lifted the cry of fanaticism against them; who, because missionaries revere the word of God, and utter themselves in the language of the New Testament, nauseate every word that comes from them as overrun with the flavour and phraseology of methodism; who are determined, in short, to abominate all that is missionary, and suffer the very sound of the epithet to fill their minds with an overwhelming association of repugnance, and prejudice, and disgust.

We would not have counted this so remarkable an example, had it not been that missionaries are accomplishing the very object on which the advocates for civilization love to expatiate. They are working for temporal good far more effectually than any adventurer in the cause ever did before; but mark the want of cogeniality between the benevolence of this world, and the benevolence of the Christian; they incur contempt, because they are working for spiritual and eternal good also: Nor

do the earthly blessings which they scatter so abundantly in their way, redeem from scorn the purer and the nobler principle which inspires them.

These observations seem to be an applicable introduction to the subject before us. I call your attention to the *way* in which the Bible enjoins us to take up the care of the poor. It does not say, in the text before us, Commiserate the poor; for, if it said no more than this, it would leave their necessities to be provided for by the random ebullitions of an impetuous and unreflecting sympathy. It provides them with a better security than the mere feeling of compassion—a feeling which, however useful for the purpose of excitement, must be controlled and regulated. Feeling is but a faint and fluctuating security. Fancy may mislead it. The sober realities of life may disgust it. Disappointment may extinguish it. Ingratitude may embitter it. Deceit, with its counterfeit representations, may allure it to the wrong object. At all events, Time is the little circle within which it in general expatiates. It needs the impression of sensible objects to sustain it; nor can it enter with zeal or with vivacity into the wants of the abstract and invisible soul. The Bible, then, instead of leaving the relief of the poor to the mere instinct of sympathy, makes it a subject for *consideration* —Blessed is he that *considereth* the poor—a grave and prosaic exercise I do allow, and which makes no figure in those high-wrought descriptions, where the exquisite tale of benevolence is made up of all the sensibilities of tenderness on the one hand, and of all the ecstacies of gratitude on the other. The

Bible rescues the cause from the mischief to which a heedless or unthinking sensibility would expose it. It brings it under the cognizance of a higher faculty—a faculty of steadier operation than to be weary in well-doing, and of sturdier endurance than to give it up in disgust. It calls you to *consider* the poor. It makes the virtue of relieving them a matter of computation as well as of sentiment; and, in so doing, it puts you beyond the reach of the various delusions, by which you are at one time led to prefer the indulgence of pity to the substantial interest of its object; at another, are led to retire chagrined and disappointed from the scene of duty, because you have not met with the gratitude or the honesty that you laid your account with; at another, are led to expend all your anxieties upon the accommodation of time, and to overlook eternity. It is the office of *consideration* to save you from all these fallacies. Under its tutorage, attention to the wants of the poor ripens into principle. I want to press its advantages upon you, for I can in no other way recommend the Society whose claims I am appointed to lay before you, so effectually to your patronage. My time will only permit me to lay before you a few of their advantages, and I shall therefore confine myself to two leading particulars.

I. The man who considers the poor, instead of slumbering over the emotions of a useless sensibility, among those imaginary beings whom poetry and romance have laid before him in all the elegance of fictitious history, will bestow the labour and the

attention of actual business among the poor of the real and the living world. Benevolence is the burden of every romantic tale, and of every poet's song. It is dressed out in all the fairy enchantments of imagery and eloquence. All is beauty to the eye and music to the ear. Nothing seen but pictures of felicity, and nothing heard but the soft whispers of gratitude and affection. The reader is carried along by this soft and delighted representation of virtue. He accompanies his hero through all the fancied varieties of his history. He goes along with him to the cottage of poverty and disease, surrounded, as we may suppose, with all the charms of rural obscurity, and where the murmurs of an adjoining rivulet accord with the finer and more benevolent sensibilities of the mind. He enters this enchanting retirement, and meets with a picture of distress, adorned in all the elegance of fiction. Perhaps a father laid on a bed of languishing, and supported by the labours of a pious and affectionate family, where kindness breathes in every word, and anxiety sits upon every countenance—where the industry of his children struggles in vain to supply the cordials which his poverty denies him—where nature sinks every hour, and all feel a gloomy foreboding, which they strive to conceal, and tremble to express. The hero of romance enters, and the glance of his benevolent eye enlightens this darkest recess of misery. He turns him to the bed of languishing, tells the sick man that there is still hope, and smiles comfort on his despairing children. Day after day he repeats his kindness and his charity. They hail his

approach as the footsteps of an angel of mercy. The father lives to bless his deliverer. The family reward his benevolence by the homage of an affectionate gratitude; and, in the piety of their evening prayer, offer up thanks to the God of heaven, for opening the hearts of the rich to kindly and beneficent attentions. The reader weeps with delight. The visions of paradise play before his fancy. His tears flow, and his heart dissolves in all the luxury of tenderness.

Now, we do not deny that the members of the Destitute Sick Society *may* at times have met with some such delightful scene, to soothe and to encourage them. But put the question to any of their visitors, and he will not fail to tell you, that if they had never moved but when they had something like this to excite and to gratify their hearts, they would seldom have moved at all; and their usefulness to the poor would have been reduced to a very humble fraction of what they have actually done for them. What is this but to say, that it is the business of a religious instructor to give you, not the elegant, but the true representation of benevolence—to represent it not so much as a luxurious indulgence to the finer sensibilities of the mind, but according to the sober declaration of Scripture, as a work and as a labour—as a business in which you must encounter vexation, opposition, and fatigue; where you are not always to meet with that elegance which allures the fancy, or with that humble and retired adversity, which interests the more tender propensities of the heart; but as a business where reluctance must often be overcome

by a sense of duty, and where, though oppressed at every step, by envy, disgust, and disappointment, you are bound to persevere, in obedience to the law of God, and the sober instigations of principle.

The benevolence of the gospel lies in action. The benevolence of our fictitious writers, in a kind of high-wrought delicacy of feeling and sentiment. The one dissipates all its fervour in sighs, and tears, and idle aspirations—the other reserves its strength for efforts and execution. The one regards it as a luxurious enjoyment for the heart—the other, as a work and a business for the hand. The one sits in indolence, and broods, in visionary rapture, over its schemes of ideal philanthropy—the other steps abroad, and enlightens, by its presence, the dark and pestilential hovels of disease. The one wastes away in empty ejaculation—the other gives time and trouble to the work of beneficence—gives education to the orphan—provides clothes for the naked, and lays food on the tables of the hungry. The one is indolent and capricious, and often does mischief by the occasional overflowings of a whimsical and ill-directed charity—the other is vigilant and discerning, and takes care lest its distributions be injudicious, and the efforts of benevolence be misapplied. The one is soothed with the luxury of feeling, and reclines in easy and indolent satisfaction—the other shakes off the deceitful languor of contemplation and solitude, and delights in a scene of activity. Remember, that virtue, in general, is not to feel, but to do—not merely to conceive a purpose, but to carry that purpose into execution—not merely to be overpowered by the impression

of a sentiment, but to practise what it loves, and to imitate what it admires.

To be benevolent in speculation, is often to be selfish in action and in reality. The vanity and the indolence of man delude him into a thousand inconsistencies. He professes to love the name and the semblance of virtue; but the labour of exertion and of self-denial, terrifies him from attempting it. The emotions of kindness are delightful to his bosom, but then they are little better than a selfish indulgence. They terminate in his own enjoyment. They are a mere refinement of luxury. His eye melts over the picture of fictitious distress, while not a tear is left for the actual starvation and misery by which he is surrounded. It is easy to indulge the imaginations of a visionary heart in going over a scene of fancied affliction, because here there is no sloth to overcome—no avaricious propensity to control—no offensive or disgusting circumstance to allay the unmingled impression of sympathy which a soft and elegant picture is calculated to awaken. It is not so easy to be benevolent in action and in reality, because here there is fatigue to undergo—there is time and money to give—there is the mortifying spectacle of vice, and folly, and ingratitude, to encounter. We like to give you the fair picture of love to man; because to throw over it false and fictitious embellishments, is injurious to its cause. They elevate the fancy by romantic visions which can never be realized. They embitter the heart by the most severe and mortifying disappointments, and often force us to retire in disgust from what heaven has

intended to be the theatre of our discipline and preparation. Take the representation of the Bible. Benevolence is a work and a labour. It often calls for the severest efforts of vigilance and industry—a habit of action not to be acquired in the schools of fine sentiment, but in the walks of business; in the dark and dismal receptacles of misery; in the hospitals of disease; in the putrid lanes of our great cities, where poverty dwells in lank and ragged wretchedness, agonized with pain, faint with hunger, and shivering in a frail and unsheltered tenement.

You are not to conceive yourself a real lover of your species, and entitled to the praise or the reward of benevolence, because you weep over a fictitious representation of human misery. A man may weep in the indolence of a studious and contemplative retirement; he may breathe all the tender aspirations of humanity; but what avails all this warm and effusive benevolence, if it is never exerted—if it never rise to execution—if it never carry him to the accomplishment of a single benevolent purpose—if it shrink from activity, and sicken at the pain of fatigue? It is easy, indeed, to come forward with the cant and hypocrisy of fine sentiment—to have a heart trained to the emotions of benevolence, while the hand refuses the labour of discharging its offices—to weep for amusement, and have nothing to spare for human suffering, but the tribute of an indolent and unmeaning sympathy. Many of you must be acquainted with that corruption of Christian doctrine which has been termed Antinomianism. It professes the highest reverence for the Su-

preme Being; while it refuses obedience to the lessons of His authority. It professes the highest gratitude for the sufferings of Christ; while it refuses that course of life and action which He demands of his followers. It professes to adore the tremendous Majesty of heaven, and to weep in shame and in sorrow over the sinfulness of degraded humanity; while every day it insults heaven by the enormity of its misdeeds, and evinces the insincerity of its repentance by its wilful perseverance in the practice of iniquity. This Antinomianism is generally condemned; and none reprobate it more than the votaries of fine sentiment—your men of taste and elegant literature—your epicures of feeling, who riot in all the luxury of theatrical emotion; and who, in their admiration of what is tender, and beautiful, and cultivated, have always turned with disgust from the doctrines of a sour and illiberal theology. We may say to such, as Nathan to David, "Thou art the man." Theirs is, to all intents and purposes, Antinomianism—and an Antinomianism of a far more dangerous and deceitful kind, than the Antinomianism of a spurious and pretended orthodoxy. In the Antinomianism of religion, there is nothing to fascinate or deceive you. It wears an air of repulsive bigotry, more fitted to awaken disgust, than to gain the admiration of proselytes. There is a glaring deformity in its aspect, which alarms you at the very outset, and is an outrage to that natural morality, which, dark and corrupted as it is, is still strong enough to lift its loud remonstrances against it. But, in the Antinomianism of high-wrought

sentiment, there is a deception far more insinuating. It steals upon you under the semblance of virtue. It is supported by the delusive colouring of imagination and poetry. It has all the graces and embellishments of literature to recommend it. Vanity is soothed, and conscience lulls itself to repose in this dream of feeling and of indolence.

Let us dismiss these lying vanities, and regulate our lives by the truth and soberness of the New Testament. Benevolence is not in word and in tongue, but in deed and in truth. It is a business with men as they are, and with human life as drawn by the rough hand of experience. It is a duty which you must perform at the call of principle; though there be no voice of eloquence to give splendour to your exertions, and no music of poetry to lead your willing footsteps through the bowers of enchantment. It is not the impulse of high and ecstatic emotion. It is an exertion of principle. You must go to the poor man's cottage, though no verdure flourish around it, and no rivulet be nigh to delight you by the gentleness of its murmurs. If you look for the romantic simplicity of fiction, you will be disappointed; but it is your duty to persevere, in spite of every discouragement. Benevolence is not merely a feeling, but a principle—not a dream of rapture for the fancy to indulge in, but a business for the hand to execute.

It must now be obvious to all of you, that it is not enough that you give money, and add your name to the contributions of charity. You must give it with judgment. You must give your time and your attention. You must descend to the

trouble of examination. You must rise from the repose of contemplation, and make yourself acquainted with the object of your benevolent exercises. Will he husband your charity with care, or will he squander it away in idleness and dissipation? Will he satisfy himself with the brutal luxury of the moment, and neglect the supply of his more substantial necessities, or suffer his children to be trained in ignorance and depravity? Will charity corrupt him into slothfulness? What is his peculiar necessity? Is it the want of health, or the want of employment? Is it the pressure of a numerous family? Does he need medicine to administer to the diseases of his children? Does he need fuel or raiment to protect them from the inclemency of winter? Does he need money to satisfy the yearly demands of his landlord; or to purchase books, and to pay for the education of his offspring?

To give money, is not to do all the work and labour of benevolence. You must go to the poor man's sick-bed. You must lend your hand to the work of assistance. You must examine his accounts. You must try to recover those debts which are due to his family. You must try to recover those wages which are detained by the injustice or the rapacity of his master. You must employ your mediation with his superiors. You must represent to them the necessities of his situation. You must solicit their assistance, and awaken their feelings to the tale of his calamity. This is benevolence in its plain, and sober, and substantial reality; though eloquence may have withheld its imagery, and poetry may have denied its graces and its embellishments.

This is true and unsophisticated goodness. It may be recorded in no earthly documents; but, if done under the influence of Christian principle —in a word, if done unto Jesus, it is written in the book of heaven, and will give a new lustre to that crown to which his disciples look forward in time, and will wear through eternity.

You have all heard of the division of labour, and I wish you to understand, that the advantage of this principle may be felt as much in the operations of charity, as in the operations of trade and of manufactures. The work of beneficence does not lie in the one act of giving money; there must be the act of attendance; there must be the act of inquiry; there must be the act of judicious application. But I can conceive that an individual may be so deficient in the varied experience and attention which a work so extensive demands, that he may retire in disgust and discouragement from the practice of charity altogether. The institution of a Society such as this, saves this individual to the cause. It takes upon itself all the subsequent acts in the work and labour of love, and restricts his part to the mere act of giving money. It fills the middle space between the dispensers and the recipients of charity. The habits of many who now hear me, may disqualify them for the work of examination. They may have no time for it; they may live at a distance from the objects; they may neither know how to introduce, nor how to conduct themselves in the management of all the details; their want of practice and of experience may disable them for the work of repelling imposition; they

may try to gain the necessary habits; and it is right that every individual among us should each, in his own sphere, consider the poor, and qualify themselves for a judicious and discriminating charity. But, in the mean time, the Society for the Relief of the Destitute Sick, is an instrument ready made to our hands. Avail yourselves of this instrument immediately; and, by the easiest part of the exercise of charity, which is to give money, you carry home to the poor all the benefit of its most difficult exercises.* The experience which you want, the members of this laudable Society are in possession of. By the work and observation of years, a stock of practical wisdom is now accumulated among them. They have been long inured to all that is loathsome and discouraging in this good work; and they have nerve, and hardihood, and principle, to front it. They are every way qualified to be the carriers of your bounty, for it is a path they have long travelled in. Give the money, and these conscientious men will soon bring it into contact with the right objects. They know the way through all the obscurities of this metropolis; and they can bring the offerings of your charity to people whom you will never see, and into houses which you will never enter. It is not easy to conceive, far less to compute the extent of human misery; but these men can give you experience for it. They can show you their registers of the sick and of the dying;

* A Society for the Destitute *Sick*, is not nearly liable to such an extent of objection, as a Society for the Relief of General Indigence. But it were well, if they kept themselves rigidly to their assigned object; and that the cases to which they administered their aid, were competently certified.

they are familiar with disease in all its varieties of faintness, and breathlessness, and pain.—Sad union! they are called to witness it in conjunction with poverty; and well do they know that there is an eloquence in the imploring looks of these helpless poor, which no description can set before you. Oh! my brethren, figure to yourselves the calamity in all its soreness, and measure your bounty by the actual greatness of the claims, and not by the feebleness of their advocate.

I have trespassed upon your patience; but, at the hazard of carrying my address to a length that is unusual, I must still say more. Nor would I ever forgive myself if I neglected to set the eternity of the poor in all its importance before you. This is the second point of consideration to which I wish to direct you. The man who considers the poor, will give his chief anxiety to the wants of their eternity. It must be evident to all of you, that this anxiety is little felt. I do not appeal for the evidence of this to the selfish part of mankind—there we are not to expect it. I go to those who are really benevolent—who have a wish to make others happy, and who take trouble in so doing; and it is a striking observation, how little the salvation of these others is the object of that benevolence which makes them so amiable. It will be found, that, in by far the greater number of instances, this principle is all consumed on the accommodations of time, and the necessities of the body. It is the meat which feeds them—the garment which covers them—the house which shelters them—the money which purchases all things: these, I say, are what

form the chief topics of benevolent anxiety. Now, we do not mean to discourage this principle. We cannot afford it; there is too little of it; and it forms too refreshing an exception to that general selfishness which runs throughout the haunts of business and ambition, for us to say any thing against it. We are not cold-blooded enough to refuse our delighted concurrence to an exercise so amiable in its principle, and so pleasing in the warm and comfortable spectacle which it lays before us. The poor, it is true, ought never to forget, that it is to their own industry, and to the wisdom and economy of their own management, that they are to look for the elements of subsistence—that if idleness and prodigality shall lay hold of the mass of our population, no benevolence, however unbounded, can ever repair a mischief so irrecoverable—that if they will not labour for themselves, it is not in the power of the rich to create a sufficiency for them; and that though every heart were opened, and every purse emptied in the cause, it would absolutely go for nothing towards forming a well-fed, a well-lodged, or a well-conditioned peasantry. Still, however, there are cases which no foresight could prevent, and no industry could provide for—where the blow falls heavy and unexpected on some devoted son or daughter of misfortune, and where, though thoughtlessness and folly may have had their share, benevolence, not very nice in its calculations, will feel the overpowering claim of actual, helpless, and imploring misery. Now, I again offer my cheerful testimony to such benevolence as this; I count it delightful to see it singling out its object, and

sustaining it against the cruel pressure of age and of indigence; and when I enter a cottage where I see a warmer fireside, or a more substantial provision, than the visible means can account for, I say that the landscape, in all its summer glories, does not offer an object so gratifying, as when referred to the vicinity of the great man's house, and the people who live in it, and am told that I will find my explanation *there*. Kind and amiable people! your benevolence is most lovely in its display, but oh! it is perishable in its consequences. Does it never occur to you, that in a few years this favourite will die—that he will go to the place where neither cold nor hunger will reach him, but that a mighty interest remains, of which, both of us may know the certainty, though neither you nor I can calculate the extent. Your benevolence is too short—it does not shoot far enough a-head—it is like regaling a child with a sweetmeat or a toy, and then abandoning the happy unreflecting infant to exposure. You make the poor old man happy with your crumbs and your fragments, but he is an infant on the mighty range of infinite duration; and will you leave the soul, which has this infinity to go through, to its chance? How comes it that the grave should throw so impenetrable a shroud over the realities of eternity? How comes it that heaven, and hell, and judgment, should be treated as so many nonentities; and that there should be as little real and operative sympathy felt for the soul, which lives for ever, as for the body after it is dead, or for the dust into which it moulders? Eternity is longer than time; the arithmetic, my

brethren, is all on our side upon this question; and the wisdom which calculates, and guides itself by calculation, gives its weighty and respectable support to what may be called the benevolence of faith.

Now, if there be one employment more fitted than another to awaken this benevolence, it is the peculiar employment of that Society for which I am now pleading. I would have anticipated such benevolence from the situation they occupy, and the information before the public bears testimony to the fact. The truth is, that the diseases of the body may be looked upon as so many outlets through which the soul finds its way to eternity. Now, it is at these outlets that the members of this Society have stationed themselves. This is the interesting point of survey at which they stand, and from which they command a look of both worlds. They have placed themselves in the avenues which lead from time to eternity, and they have often to witness the awful transition of a soul hovering at the entrance—struggling its way through the valley of the shadow of death, and at last breaking loose from the confines of all that is visible. Do you think it likely that men, with such spectacles before them, will withstand the sense of eternity? No, my brethren, they cannot, they have not. Eternity, I rejoice to announce to you, is not forgotten by them; and with their care for the diseases of the body, they are neither blind nor indifferent to the fact, that the soul is diseased also. We know it well. There is an indolent and superficial theology, which turns its eyes from the danger, and feels no

pressing call for the application of the remedy—which reposes more in its own vague and self-assumed conceptions of the mercy of God, than in the firm and consistent representations of the New Testament—which overlooks the existence of the disease altogether, and therefore feels no alarm, and exerts no urgency in the business—which, in the face of all the truths and all the severities that are uttered in the Word of God, leaves the soul to its chance; or, in other words, by neglecting to administer any thing specific for the salvation of the soul, leaves it to perish. We do not want to involve you in controversies; we only ask you to open the New Testament, and attend to the obvious meaning of a word which occurs frequently in its pages—we mean the word *saved*. The term surely implies, that the present state of the thing to be saved, is a lost and undone state. If a tree be in a healthful state from its infancy, you never apply the term saved to it, though you see its beautiful foliage, its flourishing blossoms, its abundant produce, and its progressive ascent through all the varieties incidental to a sound and a prosperous tree. But if it were diseased in its infancy, and ready to perish, and if it were restored by management and artificial applications, then you would say of this tree that it was *saved;* and the very term implies some previous state of uselessness and corruption. What, then, are we to make of the frequent occurrence of this term in the New Testament, as applied to a human being? If men come into this world pure and innocent; and have nothing more to do but to put forth the powers with

which nature has endowed them, and so to rise through the progressive stages of virtue and excellence, to the rewards of immortality, you would not say of these men that they were saved when they were translated to these rewards. These rewards of man are the natural effects of his obedience, and the term *saved* is not at all applicable to such a supposition. But the God of the Bible says differently. If a man obtain heaven at all, it is by being saved. He is in a diseased state; and it is by the healing application of the blood of the Son of God, that he is restored from that state. The very title applied to Him proves the same thing. He is called *our Saviour*. The deliverance which He effects is called our salvation. The men whom He doth deliver are called the *saved*. Doth not this imply some previous state of disease and helplessness? And from the frequent and incidental occurrence of this term, may we not gather an additional testimony to the truth of what is elsewhere more expressly revealed to us, that we are lost by nature, and that to obtain recovery, we must be found in Him who came to seek and to save that which is lost? He that believeth on the Son of God shall be saved; but he that believeth not, the wrath of God abideth on him.

We know that there are some who loathe this representation; but this is just another example of the substantial interests of the poor being sacrificed to mismanagement and delusion. It is to be hoped that there are many who have looked the disease fairly in the face, and are ready to reach forward the remedy adapted to relieve it. We should have

no call to attend to the spiritual interests of men, if they could safely be left to themselves, and to the spontaneous operation of those powers with which it is supposed that nature has endowed them. But this is not the state of the case. We come into the world with the principles of sin and condemnation within us; and, in the congenial atmosphere of this world's example, these ripen fast for the execution of the sentence. During the period of this short but interesting passage to another world, the remedy is in the gospel held out to all; and the freedom and universality of its invitations, while it opens assured admission to all who will, must aggravate the weight and severity of the sentence to those who will not; and upon them the dreadful energy of that saying will be accomplished,—"How shall they escape if they neglect so great a salvation?"

We know part of your labours for the eternity of the poor. We know that you have brought the Bible into contact with many a soul. And we are sure that this is suiting the remedy to the disease; for the Bible contains those words which are the power of God through faith unto salvation, to every one who believes them.

To this established instrument for working faith in the heart, add the instrument of hearing. When you give the Bible, accompany the gift with the living energy of a human voice—let prayer, and advice, and explanation, be brought to act upon them; and let the warm and deeply-felt earnestness of your hearts, discharge itself upon theirs in the impressive tones of sincerity, and friendship, and good will. This is going substantially to work.

It is, if I may use the expression, bringing the right element to bear upon the case before you; and be assured, that every treatment of a convinced and guilty mind is superficial and ruinous, which does not lead it to the Saviour, and bring before it His sacrifice and atonement, and the influences of that Spirit bestowed through His obedience on all who believe on Him.

While in the full vigour of health, we may count it enough to take up with something short of this. But—striking testimony to evangelical truth! go to the awful reality of a human soul on the eve of its departure from the body, and you will find that all those vapid sentimentalities which partake not of the substantial doctrine of the New Testament, are good for nothing. Hold up your face, my brethren, for the truth and simplicity of the Bible. Be not ashamed of its phraseology. It is the right instrument to handle in the great work of calling a human soul out of darkness into marvellous light. Stand firm and secure on the impregnable principle, that this is the Word of God, and that all taste, and imagination, and science, must give way before its overbearing authority. Walk in the footsteps of your Saviour, in the twofold office of caring for the diseases of the body, and administering to the wants of the soul; and though you may fail in the former—though the patient may never rise and walk, yet, by the blessing of heaven upon your fervent and effectual endeavours, the latter object may be gained—the soul may be lightened of all its anxieties—the whole burden of its diseases may be swept away—it may be of good cheer, because

its sins are forgiven—and the right direction may be impressed upon it which will carry it forward in progress to a happy eternity. Death may not be averted, but death may be disarmed. It may be stripped of its terrors, and instead of a devouring enemy, it may be hailed as a messenger of triumph.

THE TWO GREAT INSTRUMENTS APPOINTED FOR THE PROPAGATION OF THE GOSPEL;

AND

THE DUTY OF THE CHRISTIAN PUBLIC TO KEEP THEM BOTH IN VIGOROUS OPERATION:

A

SERMON,

PREACHED BEFORE

THE DUNDEE MISSIONARY SOCIETY,

ON

MONDAY, OCTOBER 26, 1812.

SERMON X.

THE TWO GREAT INSTRUMENTS APPOINTED FOR THE PROPAGATION OF THE GOSPEL; AND THE DUTY OF THE CHRISTIAN PUBLIC TO KEEP THEM BOTH IN VIGOROUS OPERATION.

"Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."—ROMANS x 17.

IN the prosecution of the following discourse, I shall *first* lay before you, in a few words, the general lesson which the text furnishes; and, in the *second* place, I shall apply it to explain the objects of that Society whose claims to the generosity of the public I am appointed to advocate.

First, As all is suspended upon God, and as He reigns with as supreme a dominion in the heart of man as in the world around us, there is no doubt that every affection of this heart—the remorse which embitters it, the terror which appals it, the faith which restores it, the love which inflames it,—there can be no doubt, I say, that all is the work of God. However great the diversity of operations, it is He that worketh all in all; and the apostle Paul expressly ascribes the faith of a human soul to the operation of His hand, when he prays, in behalf of the Thessalonians, that God would fulfil in them all the good pleasure of His goodness, and the work of faith with power.

But, on the other hand, it is evident, that throughout the wide extent of nature and of providence, though it be God alone that worketh, yet He worketh by instruments; and that, without any wish to question or to impair His sovereignty, it is an established habit of language to ascribe that to the instrument, which is solely and exclusively due to the Omnipotent Himself. We say that it is rain which makes the grass to grow: It is God, in fact, who makes the grass to grow; and He does it by the instrumentality of rain. Yet we do not say that there is any impiety in this mode of expression; nor does it imply that we in thought transfer that to the instrument, which is due only to Him in whose hand the instrument is. It is a mere habit of language, and the apostle himself has fallen into the use of it. None were more impressed than he with the pious sentiment that all depends upon God, and cometh from God; yet he does not overlook the instrumentality of a preacher, and tells the Romans, in the words of my text, that "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."

If, in that extraordinary age, when the Author of nature broke in upon the constancy of its operations, and asserted by miracles His own mighty power to subdue and to control it—if, in such an age, one of His own inspired messengers does not overlook the use and agency of instruments, surely it would ill become us to overlook them. It is right that we should carry about with us, at all times and in all places, a sentiment of piety; but it must not be piety of our own forging,—it must be the prescribed piety of revelation. We have no

right to sit in indolence, and wait for the immediate agency of Heaven, if God has told us that it is by the co-operation of human beings that the end is to be accomplished; and if He orders that co-operation, we are not merely to acquiesce in the sentiment that it is God who does the thing, but we must acquiesce in His manner of doing it; and if that be by instruments, nothing remains for us but submissively to concur and obediently to go along with it.

Now, let it be observed, that the operation of the two instruments laid before us in the text is somewhat different at present from what it was in the days of the apostles. Those were the days of inspiration; and the faith which was so widely diffused through the world in the first ages of Christianity, came by the hearing of inspired teachers. The two steps of the process were just what we find them described in the passage before us: Faith came by hearing,—it came by the hearing of the apostles; and hearing came by the word of God,—for, in the great matters of salvation, the apostles spake only as God put the word into their mouth, and as the Spirit of God gave them utterance.

But whatever is capable of being spoken is capable of being written also; and it was not long before the teachers of Christianity committed to writing the doctrine of salvation. It went over the world, and it has come down to posterity, in the form of gospels and epistles. The collection of these documents is still called the Word of God: it is in fact that word come down to us by the instrumentality of written language. If you read it with

the impression on your mind that it is the genuine production of inspired men, you are in circumstances likely enough for receiving faith. Now, however, there is a change in one of the instruments: it makes all the difference betwixt the messenger delivering the message in person, and sending you the substance of it in a written communication. In each of the ways, faith may result, and faith has resulted from it: there have been many thousand examples of the efficacy of the latter process as well as of the former;—in which case, we may say that faith came by reading, and reading by the word of God.

We are not to suppose, however, when reading was substituted in the place of hearing, that hearing was entirely laid aside. It is true, that you can no longer hear the immediate messengers of Heaven; but you can hear the descendants of these messengers. You can no longer hear men who have the benefit of inspiration; but you can hear men, whose office it is to give their study to the written documents, which the inspiration of a former age has left behind it. We know that you have access to these documents yourselves; and may light and learning grow and multiply among you. We know, that upon the solitary reading of the word, Heaven often sends its most precious influences. But we know that Heaven also gives a salutary and a saving influence to the living energy of a human voice—that the man who speaketh from the heart speaketh to it—that the tones of earnestness, and sincerity, and feeling, carry an emphasis and an infection along with them—that there is an impression in the power of example—that there is

an authority in superior learning—that there is a charm in fervent piety—that there is a usefulness in the wisdom which can apply scripture to the varieties of individual experience—that there is a force and urgency in pathetic exhortation—that there is a constraining influence in the watchful anxiety of him who entreats you to mind the things which belong to your peace. These are undoubted facts; and the minister who can combine all these in his own person, and bring them to bear upon the minds of his people, may, under the blessing of God, convert the hearing of the word into an instrument of mighty operation even in these latter days, and may exemplify my text upon many of those who are sitting and listening around him. Faith may be wrought in them with power; and when asked to explain the process by which they arrived at it, they may truly say, that their faith came by hearing, and their hearing by the word of God.

In no age of the church, indeed, does it appear that the one instrument ever superseded the other; or that, upon the mere existence of the written word among the people, the hearing of that word was ever dispensed with as a superfluous exercise. When Ezra received the written law, there is no doubt that copies of it would spread and multiply in the country; yet this was not enough in the eye of that great Jewish reformer. He himself opened the book in the sight of the people, and they stood up. He had priests and Levites along with him; and we are told in Nehemiah, that they not only "read in the book of the law of God distinctly, but they

gave the sense, and caused the people to understand the reading." And we have reason to believe, that this reading and expounding of the law was not acted upon on one solitary occasion, but that from the days of Ezra it formed a permanent institution among the Jews. We meet with traces of its existence in the New Testament. In the Acts of the Apostles, we have some information respecting the service of the synagogue. When Paul and his companions came to Antioch in Pisidia, they went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and sat down; and after the reading of the law and the prophets—a circumstance introduced without any explanation, as if it had been a mere matter of course, and a customary exercise among them—after this reading of the law and the prophets, the rulers of the synagogue sent unto them, saying, "Men and brethren, if ye have any word of exhortation unto the people, say on." But, in the Gospel by Luke, we have a piece of history still more decisive; when our Saviour himself not only sanctions by His presence, but gives the high authority of His example, to the reading and exposition of the word. He stood up, and read a passage out of their scriptures, and expounded the passage to them. It is not likely that there was any violation of the established order of the synagogue in this proceeding of our Saviour's. It was not His practice to fly in the face of any existing institution; and from this passage we collect not merely the high sanction of His example to the practice of reading and expounding, but we also collect that it was a practice in established operation among the Jews. And it

has descended, without interruption, through all the successive ages of Christian worship. The inspired teachers of Christianity deemed it necessary to leave something more than the written volume of inspiration behind them. They left teachers and overseers; and to this very day, the readings, and the explanations, and the sermons of Christian pastors, are superadded to the silent and solitary reading of Christian people; and both are found to be instruments of mighty operation, for the perfecting of the saints and for the edifying of the body of Christ.

Neither instrument is to be dispensed with. If you have hearing without reading, you lay the church open to all the corruptions of Popery. You have priests, but you have no Bibles. You have a minister, but you have no word of God to confront him. You take your lesson from the wisdom of man, and throw away from you all the light and benefit of revelation. The faith of the people lies at the mercy of every capricious element in the human character. It fluctuates with the taste and the understanding of the minister. The precious interest of your souls is committed to the passions and the prejudices of a fellow mortal,—that interest for which God himself has made so noble a provision—for which He sent His Eternal Son into the world, and conferred miracles and revelations on His followers. By pinning your creed to your minister, you put the whole of this provision away from you; you change a heavenly instructor for an earthly; you turn from the offered guidance of the Almighty, and resign the keeping of your conscience to one who, in as far as he wan-

ders from the word of God, is as blind and ignorant and helpless as yourself. No, my brethren! keep fast by your Bible. Try, if you can, to outstrip us in the wisdom of the word of Christ; and bring the salutary control of a zealous, and enlightened, and reading population, to bear upon the priesthood. Let not your faith come by hearing alone; but let your hearing be tried by the word of God. Let it not be said, that what you believe is what you have heard; and that what you have heard is what prejudice, or fancy, or habit, or unauthorized speculation, may have suggested to your minister. Let it be said that what you believe is what you have heard—not because what you have heard cometh from him, and is supported by his authority; but because you know it to be the doctrine of the Bible, and you are satisfied that he has acted the part of a faithful interpreter—not because you have tried the word by the hearing; but because you have tried the hearing by the word—not because you have brought revelation under the tribunal of your minister; but because you have brought your minister under the tribunal of revelation. In the mighty concern of your faith, we give you every encouragement to bring your own reading and your own discernment into action. Have the Bible, that high and ultimate standard of appeal, perpetually in your eye. Cultivate a growing acquaintance with this standard. It will keep all right and steady, and save you from being agitated by the ever-varying winds of human doctrine and human speculation. Your faith will come by hearing, but your hearing by the word of God.

But, I again repeat it, neither instrument is to be dispensed with. If you have reading without hearing, you throw away the benefit of a public ministry—an institution sanctioned by the Bible, and transmitted to us through all the successive ages of the church, from the very time of the apostles. Let every man, if possible, be as enlightened as his minister; and let us make perpetual approaches to that state of things when "they shall teach no more every man his brother and every man his neighbour, saying, 'Know the Lord;' for they shall all know me, from the least of them even to the greatest." It is our delight and our confidence that scriptural knowledge is every day extending among you; but we cannot shut our eyes to the obvious fact, that the degree of illumination foretold by the prophet is not yet arrived,—that though the majority be thinning every year, yet the unenlightened are still the majority,—that priests have still to do what they did in the days of Ezra; they have not merely to read in the book of the law distinctly, but they have to give the sense and cause you to understand the reading,—that though, after the era of universal light, some may think that the institution of a public ministry might be dispensed with; yet as the era has not yet arrived, but we are only on the road to it, the institution itself is one of the most powerful expedients for hastening its accomplishment. But what is more, I would not rashly give up the hearing of the word even after the light of perfect knowledge has dawned in all its brilliancy upon the world. "Wherefore, I will not be negligent," says the apostle Peter, "to put you always

in remembrance of these things, though you know them, and be established in the present truth." Though you have no knowledge to receive, you have memories to be refreshed; minds which, however pure, need to be stirred up by way of remembrance. It is true, you have the Bible within your reach; but every man knows how different in point of certainty is the doing of a thing which may be done at any time, and the doing of a thing which habit and duty have accustomed you to repeat at stated intervals. You may not be disposed at all times to bring your minds into contact with your Bibles; but upon a simple and mechanical act of obedience to the Sabbath-bell, a population is assembled, and a minister is in his place, whose office it is to bring the Bible into contact with your minds. I do not speak of his ministrations from house to house. I speak of his ministrations from the pulpit, whence it is often the high prerogative of a single man to make the word of God bear with energy and effect upon the consciences of hundreds. And he can do more than this; he can spread around him the infection of his own piety. He can kindle the fine ardours of sentiment and sincerity among his hearers. He can pour out all his tenderness and all his anxiety upon them. By the power and urgency of a living voice, he can touch the hearts of his people; and, with the blessing of God upon his endeavours, he can pull down the indolence, and the security, and the strong holds of corruption within them. The worth of the man can give a mighty energy to the words of the minister; and, what with the example of one, and the stirring eloquence of

another, I hold an active, a pure, and a zealous ministry, spread over the face of the country, and labouring in its districts and parishes, to be one great palladium of Christianity in the land.

This brings me, in the Second place, to the object of that Society whose claims upon the generosity of the public I am appointed to lay before you.

But pardon me, if I put a case to you, taken from ordinary life, for the sake of familiar and convincing illustration.

Let me suppose, that upon any one individual among you there has devolved the entire maintenance of a helpless orphan, and that you lie under a solemn obligation to acquit yourself to the full of this benevolent undertaking. You know that the term "maintenance" embraces in it many particulars; but, for the present, I shall confine my attention to two,—the food to eat, and the raiment to put on. Both must be provided for the object of your charity; and for this purpose, you must look forward to the payment of separate accounts; and the thing which you are bound to do cannot be accomplished without satisfying the demands of two or more tradesmen. You may feed the child,—but withhold from it raiment, and you leave it to perish in the inclemency of the weather; you may clothe the child,—but withhold from it food, and it dies in the agonies of hunger. You have done something, it is true; and that something was very essential: but you have also omitted something; and that something was equally essential, so much so, indeed, that, by virtue of the omission, the un-

happy orphan has perished; and upon you lie the guilt and the cruelty of having abandoned it. I speak in these strong terms, because I am supposing that the individual is both bound and able to accomplish the entire maintenance of the child. Yet, when called to account for the barbarity of his conduct, I can conceive an explanation by which he might attempt to palliate his negligence. "It is true, I was quite equal to the task; but then I was so teased by the number of separate accounts and separate applications! Had one tradesman undertaken to provide all the articles of maintenance, my patience would not have been exhausted: But I had not one, but several, to satisfy; and I fairly confess that I got tired and disgusted at the number of them." The answer to this is quite obvious. It is found, that if one man devotes an undivided attention to one kind of work, he carries it to far greater perfection than if his attention were distracted among several. It is this principle which has given rise to the division of employment in society. Each individual betakes himself to his own trade and his own manufacture. The accommodations of life are poured in far greater abundance upon the country; and each article is both better done, and furnished far more cheaply, than if one individual had undertaken to prepare every thing which enters into the maintenance of a human being.

When our Saviour left the earth, He left a task behind him to his disciples,—"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations." A great part of the task has devolved upon us; for it is not yet accom-

plished. There are nations who never heard of the name of Jesus; and the cause of sending light and Christianity amongst them is left an orphan upon the world. There are thousands, even in this professing country, who would spurn at the orphan, and pour upon it the cruelty of their derision: But there are others who feel an emphasis in the last words of their Saviour, and have taken into their protection the cause which he has bequeathed to us. On the benevolence of a Christian public, the maintenance of that cause is devolved. It is their part not to leave it to perish amongst the garbled and unfinished operations of a cold, timid, and hesitating selfishness. The propagation of the gospel is the task which your Saviour has consigned to you. It is a cause the maintenance of which consists of various particulars; but I confine myself to two,—you must put the mighty instruments of my text into operation; and you must keep them a-going till your object be accomplished. That object is the salvation of the Heathen. There is only one name given under heaven whereby men can be saved. There is only one way in which salvation can be brought about, and it is this—"The gospel is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." My text tells you that "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." Send Bibles among them: but there are many countries, where, without missionaries, a Bible is a sealed book, and a packet of Bibles a mere spectacle for savages to stare at. Without a human agent in the business, you keep back one of the instruments entirely,—you keep

back the hearing of the word; and what is more, without a human agent, you leave the other instrument unfinished,—you may give the Bible, but you keep back the capacity of reading it. Both must be done; and if you withhold human agents, you starve and you stifle the cause which it is your duty to support and to stand by through all its necessities.

To make the case before us correspond in all its points to the imaginary one which I have already brought forward, the first question I have to answer is, Whether there be ability in the public to discharge the various claims which are made upon its benevolence? My reply is a very short one. Much has been already done in the way of turning men from darkness to the light and the knowledge of Christianity; and what we aim at is, that this rate of activity be not only kept up, but extended. Now, to estimate whether there be a fund in the country for future operations, let us calculate the actual expenses of the past. I do not confine myself to the expenses of the Missionary Society; I add to them the expenses of the Bible Society, and all the others which exist in the country for religious purposes: and I am fairly within limits, when I say that the joint expense of the whole does not exceed a hundred thousand pounds in the year.* Before you stand appalled at the magnitude of the sum, divide it among the British population; and you will find, that what has been already done for the extension of gospel light among the nations of the world amounts to a penny a month for each

* It is now considerably beyond this.

householder, or twopence a year for each individual within the limits of the empire. This plain statement sets the question of ability at rest; and any objection on the score of extravagance in our demands upon the public will not bear a hearing.

The next question we have to answer is, Why are we teased then with so many separate applications? Could not one Society embrace all the various objects connected with religion; and could not all the various demands be reduced to the simplicity of one yearly subscription?—One Society might embrace all the objects connected with religion; but, on the principle of the division of employment, separate Societies, each devoting itself to one of these objects, are productive of greater good: they do more business, upon cheaper terms. Instead of one Society, overpowered with the extent and embarrassed with the multiplicity of its concerns, we have many, each cultivating one department, and giving the labours of its committee to one assigned object. It is just another example of the separation of employments. The Societies of England have naturally formed themselves into that arrangement which they find to be most useful and efficient: and when I see one with its printing utensils, multiplying copies of the Word of God,—another, with its Missionary College, training adventurous spirits for all the climes and countries of the world,—another, with its Jewish Chapel, for fighting the battles of the faith with its oldest and most inveterate enemies,—another with its apparatus of schools and teachers, for carrying the Lancasterian method among the unlettered popu-

lation of all countries,—another, singling out Africa as the sole object of its exertions; and by the introduction of knowledge and the arts, contriving some reparation for the wrongs of that deeply-injured continent—In all these I see a refreshing spectacle, a warm spirit of religious benevolence animating them all; but each, by betaking itself to its own object and assiduously culturing its own vineyard, rendering the work and the labour of love far more productive, than any single Society with the wealth of all at its command could possibly have accomplished.

The propagation of the gospel is a cause the maintenance of which consists of various particulars; but I restrict your attention to two,—the providing of Bibles, and the providing of human agents. The former is the word of God, one of the instruments of my text. The latter by teaching them to read, teaches unlettered people to use that instrument; and to the latter belongs the exclusive office of bringing the other instrument to bear upon them—the instrument of hearing. The Society whose office it is to provide the former instrument is well known by the name of the Bible Society: The Society whose office it is to provide the latter instrument is also well known by the name of the Missionary Society. It is the duty of a Christian public to keep both instruments in vigorous operation. Each of these Societies has mighty claims upon you. I will not venture to pronounce a comparison between them; but if the question were put to me, shall any part of the funds of the one Society be transferred to the other? I would not

hesitate to reply, *Not one farthing.* You are not to provide food for the orphan at the expense of its raiment; nor are you to provide raiment for it at the expense of its food. You are to provide both, at the expense of those upon whom its maintenance has devolved. You are to interest the public in both objects. You are to state, and you state truly, that neither of them is yet sufficiently provided for,—that every shilling of addition to the funds of either Society is an addition of good to the Christian cause,—that, though as much has been done as to justify the most splendid anticipations, yet much more remains to be done, in both departments, before these anticipations can be carried into effect. Each Society should send its advocates over the country; and if one of them were at this moment sounding the merits of the Bible Society in another church and to another people, I would not view him as a rival, but hail him as a brother and as a friend; and when told of the success of his efforts and the magnitude of his collection, I would bless God and rejoice along with him.

They are sister Societies. I have not time to detail the operations of either; for these I refer you to their Reports, which are published every year, and are accessible to all of you. But, to satisfy you, I shall select a few particulars, from a source which you will deem pure and unexceptionable. I shall give the testimony of one Society to the usefulness of another; and from the Reports of the Bible Society, I shall present you with arguments, why, whatever extent and efficiency be given to the one, the other is not to be abandoned.

The very second in the list of donations by the Bible Society is "to the Mohawk nations, two thousand copies of the Gospel of St. John." But who prepared the Indians of Upper Canada for such a present?—They were Missionaries. There are Missionaries now labouring amongst them employed by our Society; and had it not been for the previous exertions of human agents, this field of usefulness would have been withheld from the Bible Society altogether.

Another donation is "To India, to be applied to the translation of the Scriptures into the Oriental languages, one thousand pounds;" and this has been swelled by farther donations to a very princely sum. It is in aid of the noble undertaking of translating the Scriptures into the fifteen languages of India. But who set it a-going?—A Missionary Society.* Who showed that it was practicable?—The human agents sent out by that Society. Who are accomplished for presiding over the different translations?—The same human agents, who have lived for years among the natives, and have braved resistance and death in the noble enterprise. Who formed a Christian population eager to receive these versions the moment they have issued from the press, and who have already absorbed whole editions of the New Testament?—The same answer,—Missionaries. Our own Society can lay claim to part of this population: they have formed native schools, and have added to the number of native Christians.

The next two donations I offer to your attention are, first, "for circulation in the West India

* The translators in India were sent out by the Baptist Society.

Islands and the Spanish Main, one hundred Bibles and nine hundred Testaments in various languages;" second, "To negro congregations of Christians in Antigua, &c., five hundred Bibles and one thousand Testaments." Why is there any usefulness in this donation?—Because Missionaries have gone before it. Do these copies really circulate? Yes, they do, among the negroes whom those intrepid men have Christianized under the scowl of jealousy,—whom they have taught to look up to the Saviour as their friend, and to heaven as their asylum,—and who, for the home they have been so cruelly torn from, have held out rest to their oppressed but believing spirits in the mansions which Christ has gone to prepare for them.

The next example shall comprise several donations. "First, To the Hottentot Christians at Bavian's-kloof and Grune-kloof, in South Africa, so many Bibles and Testaments; second, To the Rev. Dr. Van der Kemp, at Bethelsdorp, South Africa, for the Christian Hottentots, &c., fifty Dutch Testaments and twelve Dutch Bibles; third, To the Rev. Mr. Anderson, Orange River, South Africa, fifty Dutch Testaments and twelve Dutch Bibles; fourth, To the Rev. Mr. Albrecht, in the Namacqua country, South Africa, fifty Dutch Testaments and twelve Dutch Bibles; fifth, To the Rev. Mr. Kicherer, Graaf Reinet, South Africa, one hundred Dutch Testaments and twelve Dutch Bibles." Now, what names and what countries are these?—They are the very countries which the Missionary Society is now cultivating, and the names

of the very labourers sent out and maintained by them. The Bibles and Testaments are sent out in behalf of the many hundreds whom our Society had previously reclaimed from Heathenism. The one Society is enabled to scatter the good seed in such profusion, because the other Society had prepared the ground for receiving it. Nor are the labours of these illustrious men confined to the business of Christianizing. They are at this moment giving the arts, and industry, and civilization, to the natives;—they are raising a beautiful spectacle to the moral eye amid the wilderness around them;—they are giving piety, and virtue, and intelligence, to the prowling savages of Africa; and extending among the wildest of Nature's children the comforts and the decencies of humanized life. O, ye orators and philosophers who make the civilization of the species your dream! look to Christian Missionaries, if you want to see the men who will realize it: You may deck the theme with the praises of your unsubstantial eloquence; but these are the men who are to accomplish the business! They are now risking every earthly comfort of existence in the cause; while you sit in silken security, and pour upon their holy undertaking the cruelty of your scorn.

But I must draw to a close; and shall only offer one donation more to your notice, as an evidence of the close alliance in point of effect betwixt the Bible and Missionary Societies—those two great fellow-labourers in the vineyard of Christian benevolence. "For the Esquimaux Indians, one thousand copies of St. Matthew's Gospel, in their

vernacular tongues." Who gave these Indians a written language? Who translated a gospel into their vernacular tongue? By what unaccountable process has it been brought about, that we now meet with readers and Christians among these furred barbarians of the North?—The answer is the same, All done by the exertions of Missionaries: and had it not been for them, the Bible Society would no more have thought at present of a translation into the language of Labrador, than they would have thought of a translation into any of the languages of unexplored Africa.

The two Societies go hand in hand. The one plows while the other sows: And let no opposition be instituted betwixt their claims on the generosity of the public. Let the advocates of each strain to the uttermost. The statement I have already given proves that there is a vast quantity of unbroken ground in the country for subscriptions to both; and how, by the accumulation of littles which no individual will ever feel or regret, a vast sum is still in reserve for the operations of these Christian philanthropists. They are at this moment shedding a glory over the land, far beyond what the tumults or the triumphs of victory can bestow. Their deeds are peaceful, but they are illustrious; and they are accomplishing a grander and a more decisive step in the history of the species, than even he who in the mighty career of a sweeping and successful ambition has scattered its old establishments into nothing. I have only to look forward a few years, and I see *him* in his sepulchre; and a few years more, and all the dynasties he has

formed give way to some new change in the vain and restless politics of the world. But the men with whom I contrast him have a more unperishable object in contemplation: I see the sublime character of eternity stamped upon their proceedings! The frailties of earthly politics do not attach to them; for they are the instruments of God,—they are carrying on the high administration of heaven,—they are hastening the fulfilment of prophecies uttered in a far distant antiquity. "Many are going to and fro and knowledge is increased."—"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord; for as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts. For as the rain cometh down and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater,—so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: It shall not return unto me void; but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it."

I stand here as the advocate for the Missionary Society—for the men who are now going to and fro and increasing knowledge, and are preparing ground in so many different quarters of the world for the good seed of the word of God. I have already urged upon you the plea of their usefulness: I have now to urge upon you the plea of their necessities. They have exerted themselves not only according to their power, but beyond their power. They are in debt to their treasurer. Their embarrassments

are their glory; and it is your part to save them from these embarrassments, lest they should become your disgrace. It is not for me to sit in judgment upon the circumstances of any individual amongst you. Are you poor?—I ask you to give no more than you can spare; nor will I keep back from you what the Bible says, "That he who provideth not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel." But the same Bible gives examples of the exercise of charity and alms-giving among the poor: The widow who threw her mite into the treasury was very poor: The members of the Church in Corinth were in general poor;—at least we are told that there were not many mighty, and not many noble, not many rich, among them;—and yet this does not restrain the apostle from soliciting, nor does it restrain them from contributing to the necessities of the poor saints which were in Jerusalem. Throw the little you can spare into the treasury of Christian beneficence. It may be small; but if you give with cheerfulness, it will be counted more than many splendid donations. And as we are among scriptural examples and scriptural authorities, let us offer to your notice another advice of the apostle:—"Once a-week, let every one of you lay by him in store as God hath prospered him." This brings down the practice of charity to the level of the poor and labouring classes of society. Let me suppose that God enables you to lay by a single penny a-week to the cause I am pleading for,—a small offering, you will allow; but mark the power and the productiveness of littles.

If each householder of this town were to come forward with his penny a-week, it would raise for the Missionary Society upwards of a thousand pounds a-year. I know that in point of fact they will not all come forward,—that a few are really not able, and that more are not willing. Let me suppose, then, the trumpet sounded, by which all the destitute, all the faint-hearted, all the mockers at piety, are warned away from the cause; and that the number is reduced to one out of ten: There is nothing very sanguine, surely, in the calculation that one-tenth would stand by this glorious cause,—a small proportion, no doubt; but if carried in the same proportion over the face of the country, it would produce for our Society an annual sixty thousand pounds,—a sum exceeding by six times any yearly income which they have yet realized. I wish to exalt the poor to the consequence which belongs to them. There is a weight and an influence in numbers; and they have it. The individual offering may be small, but the produce of these weekly associations would give a mighty energy to the benevolent enterprises that are now afloat in the country. You have it in your power to form such an association; you can hold forth the example of a vigorous and well-conducted system; you can lead the way; you can spread abroad the statement of your success. Be assured that others would soon follow; and the combined efforts of our poor men and our labourers would do more for the cause of the gospel, than all the splendid offerings which the rich have yet thrown into the treasury.

Let me now turn to the rich, and entreat from

them a liberality and an aid worthy of the situation in which Providence has placed them. They have already signalized themselves; and one of the most animating signs of our day is the opening and extending sympathy of the great for the spiritual necessities of their brethren. I call upon them to open their hearts, and pour out the flood of their benevolence on this purest and worthiest of causes, —a cause on which the civilization of the globe and the eternity of millions are suspended. I hope better things of you, my wealthier hearers, than that you will do any thing but spurn at the paltry calculations which prey upon the fancies of the unfeeling and the sordid. "I give so much already!—I am so beset with applications!—I give to the Bible Society; I give to the charitable institutions of the town; I give to the vagrant who stands at my door; I give to the subscription-paper that is unfolded in my parlour; I am assailed with beggary in all its forms; and, from the clamorous beggary of the streets to the no less clamorous beggary of the pulpit, there is an extorting process going on, which, I have reason to fear, will in the end impoverish and exhaust me!" Pardon me, my brethren; I am in possession of no ground whatever for imputing this pathetic lamentation to you; nor do I know that I am now personifying a single individual amongst you. I am merely bringing forward a specimen of that kind of eloquence which is sometimes uttered upon an occasion like the present; and I do it for the purpose of bringing forward the effectual refutation of which it admits. We do not ask any to impoverish or exhaust themselves. We assail the rich with no more urgency

than the poor; for we say to both alike—Give only what you can spare. We hold the question of almsgiving to depend not on what has been already given, but on what superfluity of wealth you are still in possession of. We know that to this question very different answers will be given, according to the principles and views and temper of the individual to whom it is applied; nor are we eager to pursue the question into all its applications. We do not want the offerings of an extorted charity; we barely state the merits of the case, and leave the impression with your own hearts, my friends and fellow Christians. But when I take a view of society, and see the profusion and the splendour that surround me,—when I see magnificence in every room that I enter, and luxury on every table that is set before me,—when I see the many thousand articles where retrenchment is possible, and any one of which would purchase for its owner the credit of unexampled liberality,—when I see the sons and the daughters of fortune swimming down the full tide of enjoyment; and am told, that out of all this extravagance there is not a fragment to spare for sending the light of Christianity into the negro's hut, or pouring it abroad over the wide and dreary wilderness of Paganism—Surely, surely, you will agree with me in thinking, that we have now sunk down into the age of frivolity and of little men. Think of this, my brethren,—that upon what a single individual has withheld out of that which he ought to have given, the sublime march of a human soul from time to eternity may have been arrested! Seize upon this conception in all its magnitude; and tell me,

if, when put by the side of the sordid plea and the proud or angry refusal, all the gaieties of wealth and all its painted insignificance do not wither into nothing.

But I *must* come to a conclusion. There are hearts which will resist every power of urgency that is brought to bear upon them; but there are others which do not require it,—those hearts which feel the influence of the gospel, and have the experience of its comforts. Those to whom Christ is precious, will long that others should taste of that preciousness. Those who have buried all their anxieties and all their terrors in the sufficiency of the atonement, will long that the knowledge of a remedy so effectual should be carried round the globe, and put within the reach of the myriads who live in guilt and who die in darkness. Those who know that the only refuge of man is under the covering of the one Mediatorship, will long to stretch forth the curtains of so secure a habitation —to lengthen the cords and to strengthen the stakes —to break forth on the right hand and on the left, and to extend a covering so ample over the sinners of all latitudes and of all countries. In a word, those who love the honour of the Saviour, will long that His kingdom be extended till all the nations of the earth be brought under His one grand and universal monarchy—till the powers of darkness shall be extinguished—till the mighty Spirit which Christ purchased by His obedience shall subdue every heart, shall root out the existence of sin, shall restore the degeneracy of our fallen nature, shall

put an end to the restless variations of human folly and human injustice, and shall establish one wide empire of righteousness over a virtuous and a happy world.

ON PREACHING TO THE COMMON PEOPLE:

A

SERMON,

DELIVERED AT

THE OPENING OF THE DEAN CHURCH,

NEAR EDINBURGH,

ON THE 15TH OF MAY, 1836.

PREFACE.

THE following Sermon would not have been published, but for the request of the subscribers to the Dean Church—by whose munificent aid this commodious fabric has been raised for the especial benefit of the families in that neighbourhood.

As a similar erection in every district, whether of town or country, which requires it, is the great object which the friends to the Christian education of the people are now labouring to accomplish—we are inclined to offer a brief history of our undertaking, along with a statement of the principles on which the necessity for a New Church was judged and ascertained.

We seldom think of a previous statistical inquiry in any locality, for the purpose of being satisfied that a parish missionary might be advantageously placed within its limits. The conviction of its desirableness may seize upon us at once, from the general aspect of the streets and houses, from the palpable destitution of those who live in them, from the frequent Sabbath groupes both of children and adults, to whom the habit of attendance on a place of social and public worship is obviously unknown—all these might give, if not the well-defined, at least the well-founded impression of a moral wilderness, on which we might enter with all propriety as on a befitting field for the instant application of those methods of culture, the object of which is to reclaim a given population, circumscribed by given boundaries, to the decencies and the observations of a well-taught and well-ordered parish.

The present missionary in the Water of Leith* began his operations at Martinmas 1833,—congregating the few who were disposed to hear him on the Sabbath; and carrying forth among them all, his attentions and services throughout the week. It is

* A suburb village close to Edinburgh, and far the most populous of those localities which are attached to the Dean Church.

a most valuable experience, and convertible, when acted on, into the most precious and important results—that, however little a people in these circumstances might be inclined to attend the public ministrations of a preacher of the gospel, they generally, if not universally, welcome his household ministrations. They are at all times glad to see him in their own dwelling-places; and gratefully respond to his labours amongst their young, or their sick, or their dying. And the process does not stop here. His week-day attentions are followed up in very many and a constantly increasing number of instances, by their Sabbath attendance—and, as the fruit of his assiduity, he gradually builds up for himself a congregation of hearers. Accordingly our missionary had to transfer his public services from a smaller to a larger place of meeting —an old malt-granary, capable, with great pressure, of accommodating towards 400 attendants, and which was generally filled to an overflow.

On this encouragement alone, and without proceeding to any statistical examination, we should have felt ourselves warranted to attempt the erection of a new church for the more complete accommodation of the householders around it. However, we did resolve on a survey of the ecclesiastical state of the families—not that we wanted any more evidence of a great and sufficient destitution for such an enterprise than we had already; but that we felt it desirable both to silence opposition, and to gain subscribers to our cause, by a distinct arithmetical exhibition of the good that remained to be done and of the materials which still existed for filling a new place of worship. We accordingly found, by one of our earliest surveys,* that of 1356 people who inhabited the Water of Leith and Dean village, only 143 had a right to sittings in places of worship of all denominations; or, in other words, that no more than 286 (estimating the number who should attend public worship at only one-half the population) were fully provided with the means of public religious instruction—leaving a gross population of 1070 for being reclaimed to regular congregational habits. It thus is that our most careful inquiries strengthened the conclusion at which we had previously arrived, even on the cur-

* Some later and more extended surveys have since been made by us in the same quarter. They all agree in the result, that only about one in nine of the population had sittings in all places of worship

sory observation of but one glance at the neighbourhood in question—such observation, in fact, as makes it morally certain to all intelligent by-passers through the plebeian sections and environs of our city, that there exist in Edinburgh, at least 20 localities alike destitute and alike standing in need of being recalled from a state of fearful desecration. At all events, we felt abundantly warranted in our attempts to raise a Parish Church, which, with a parish of 2000 people attached to it, would have enough of unbroken ground for the labours of any clergyman—who, if he but succeeded in forming these into a parochial family, would perform a service that amply repaid any exertion which might be made at the expense of individuals, any endowment which might be provided at the expense of the state.

It might be asked, why the existence of so much unoccupied church-room in the immediate neighbourhood had no effect in superseding our enterprise? Say that five hundred people in the Water of Leith alone, who should have been in church every Sunday, had sittings nowhere—but that within a few hundred yards, as in the meeting-house at Dean Street, there was more than this number of sittings both unlet and unoccupied. Ought not this to have satisfied us that enough of accommodation, and of near accommodation too, existed for the supply of all the destitution that we had ascertained? And how in the face of such a phenomenon, did we incur the useless expense of building another church, and so providing more accommodation, when more existed already than was found to be wanted?

As the delusion which prompts these questions has turned out to be a very mischievous one, it might be worth while to bestow a few sentences on the treatment of it. The proximate existence of these two phenomena—a great amount of unoccupied church-room on the one hand, and an equal amount of population who attend nowhere upon the other, must have some cause, which, if once discovered, may suggest the appropriate remedy. And it requires no length of time to make the discovery. In as far as the seat-rents are too high, they present an effectual barrier in the way of the families of the working classes; and so far their non-attendance is accounted for. But many of the unlet sittings are low-rented; and we have therefore yet only given part of the explanation, not the whole of it. The greater and more important

part of the explanation in fact remains behind. For reclaiming to church a people who have lapsed into the habits of Sabbath idleness or Sabbath profanation, something more is necessary than to remove a barrier—an impulse must be given to them. It is well that the barrier of a high seat-rent should be done away, so as to let the people in; but, over and above this, a moving force must be brought to bear upon them, so as to compel the people in. Unless they are thus assailed, the seats might be made indefinitely low, or even altogether free, yet remain unoccupied. Now this moving force lies wholly in the household and week-day attentions of the clergyman, and the consequent re-action upon this is the Sabbath attendance of the people. It was this, and this alone, which filled the old malt-granary in the Water of Leith; and it is only this which can fill at length our new Dean Church. The meeting-house at Dean Street did not supersede the New Dean Church, just because it wants this living machinery. Its minister is not the minister of a territorial establishment. He does not work on the territorial principle. He does not chalk out for himself a local or geographical vineyard, within the limits of which he concentrates the main force of his attentions and services, and offers himself in the capacity of their pastor or Christian friend to all the families. We could not abandon to him a district of which he takes no charge—nor, because of the existence of a chapel in their vicinity to them altogether useless, did we conclude that nothing more was to be done for the people who had not found their way to it. The truth is, that we felt ourselves the more shut up by it to a conclusion altogether opposite. The general or congregational church at Dean Street has had no effect on our families—Let us therefore try the effect of a local or territorial church at the Dean. If the one expedient have been tried and found wanting, this is the very reason why another expedient of a different sort should be put into operation. If a church wanting the territorial principle has not told on the great mass of this contiguous population, let us now attempt a church having the territorial principle. And hitherto we have had every encouragement. On a late survey of our district, it was found that only five individuals had taken sittings in the meeting-house at Dean Street; but it was at the same time found, that no less than 364 had found their way to the old malt-granary, and were

in regular attendance upon its ministrations. If any thing can convince the gainsayers of the efficacy of the territorial principle —this surely ought. It emboldened us onward to the erection that we have now completed; and so far from suffering the contiguous church at Dean Street to lay an arrest upon our enterprise, it supplied the strongest *argumentum a fortiore* in favour of it.

The church was opened on the 15th of May; and as we hold the results to be very instructive, we think it right that they should be made known.

Its sittings are somewhat above a thousand. About three hundred of these are let at two shillings each, and the rest are laid out in an ascending scale which terminates at twelve shillings each. These higher prices are, in the meantime, indispensable for the maintenance of the clergyman. Should an endowment be granted, it will enable us proportionally to increase the number of low priced sittings; and thus give to the endowment, not the obnoxious character of a boon to churchmen, but its proper character of a boon to the population.

A capital circumstance in the seat-letting of these territorial churches, is the rigid preference held out, in the first instance, to the residenters of the district. They at all times should have the first offer; and the opportunity for a week or a fortnight of choosing for themselves without the rivalship of competitors from abroad. This was observed by us with the greatest exactness, and with the following results.

All the two shillings sittings have been engrossed by the people of the district, and about a hundred more sittings at higher prices. Two large hospitals, the one an asylum for orphans, the other for the education of children whose parents have fallen into decayed circumstances, have taken two hundred and thirty-six sittings, and, as being really within the territory, furnish a strictly parochial attendance. Over and above these, we have sixty-five extra parochial seat-holders, who are still continuing to flow in upon us. Altogether, we have, in the course of a very short time, let more than two-thirds of the church, so that, at present there remain only about three hundred sittings to be disposed of.

But notwithstanding this gratifying result, the argument for an endowment, as grounded on the moral good that would result from it, remains as strong as ever. Apart from the hospitals, the

whole yearly produce of our seat-rents would as yet only amount to L.84, leaving a wretched pittance for the clergyman, after deducting all the minor expenses attendant on the service and keeping of the church. It is only by an endowment that we can afford to bring a greater number of our pews within reach of the common people, and make our church serve its proper and primary design, of a universal blessing to their families.

There is one instructive fact connected with this seat-letting, the simple statement of which ought to make that an easy which is unaccountably felt by some to be a difficult explanation. We have sixteen sittings at one shilling each; but these of such marked and decided inferiority, that, notwithstanding their cheapness, only one of them has been let—while all the two-shillings sittings have been taken, but comparatively few of the higher priced sittings, at least by parishioners. This exposes the sophistry by which it is attempted to palliate the grievous injustice done to a population, in retaining but a few refuse sittings at moderate prices for the poorer families of each parish, and fixing such high prices on the general accommodation of each church, as to cause a virtual exclusion of the great mass of the common people. To wait till these poor and disreputable sittings are filled ere any reduction shall be made on the higher priced sittings, is to wait for ever. The way to draw the great bulk and body of a population to church is to have the majority of the sittings low, and to hold out a preference to parishioners in letting them. It is the opposite practice which has frustrated the great purposes of an establishment in most of our large towns.

On the whole, the lesson we should like most to enforce on the friends of an establishment, is the immense power of week-day attentions when brought to bear upon the people with all the greater intensity, by their being confined to the families of a given territory. We trust that the projectors of new churches in towns will every day become more alive to the exceeding value of the territorial principle, and never lose sight of it in the arrangements which they make. As a preparatory arrangement the appointment of a district missionary previous to, and during the erection of the church, is of inestimable importance. To this we owe the achievement, that whereas previous to the erection of our church, the number of people in its district who held sittings in all places,

amounted to but one in nine; they now amount to more than one in three of the whole population.

The only explanation we would now offer in regard to the Sermon is, that it was followed up at intervals by two several addresses, one previous to the collection, and another at the conclusion of the service, when announcing the postponement of the afternoon meeting to the evening, because of the eclipse which took place on that day. These we have separated sufficiently from the Sermon to distinguish them from it.

SERMON XI.

ON PREACHING TO THE COMMON PEOPLE.

"And the common people heard him gladly."—MARK xii. 37.

Two discourses might be framed on this text—one addressed to the preachers of sermons, and another to the hearers of sermons. The great topic of the first should be the example of our Saviour as a preacher; and the great topic held out should be that He preached to the delight and acceptance of the common people. There is no doubt the vanity of popular applause; but there is also the vanity of an ambitious eloquence, which throws the common people at a distance from our instructions altogether; which, in laying itself out for the admiration of the tasteful and enlightened few, locks up the bread of life from the multitude; which destroys this essential attribute of the gospel, that it is a message of glad tidings to the poor; and wretchedly atones by the wisdom of words, for the want of those plain and intelligible realities which all may apprehend and by which all may be edified. Now the great aim of our ministry is to win souls; and the soul of a poor man consists of precisely the same elements with the soul of a rich. They both labour under the same disease, and they both stand in need of the same treatment. The physician who administers to their bodies brings forward the same appli-

cation to the same malady; and the physician who is singly intent on the cure of their souls will hold up to both the same peace-speaking blood, and the same sanctifying Spirit, and will preach to both in the same name, because the only name given under heaven whereby men can be saved. If he do otherwise, then is he preaching himself, instead of giving an entire and honest aim to the management of the case that is before him; and does the same provoking injustice to his hearers with the physician, who expends his visit in playing off the pedantry of airs and manners before the eyes of his agonizing patient—when he should be binding up his wounds, or letting him know in plain language a plain and practicable remedy.

We hear of the orator of fashion, the orator of the learned, the orator of the mob. A minister of the gospel of Jesus Christ should be none of these; and, if an orator at all, it should be his distinction that he is an orator of the species. He should look beyond the accidental and temporary varieties of our condition; and recognise in every one who comes within his reach, the same affecting spectacle of a soul forfeited by sin, and that can only be restored by one Lord, one faith, one baptism. In the person of Nicodemus, it is likely, that both wealth and learning stood before the Saviour; but to His eye, these appear to have been paltry and perishable distinctions. He took up this case in precisely the same way that He would have done the case of one of the common people. They both laboured under the malignity of the same disease; and both, to be made meet for the inheritance,

had to undergo the same regeneration. The varieties of fortune and accomplishment were of no importance at all in His argument. They were utterly insignificant as to the great purpose which He had in view. He reasoned on the great elements of flesh and spirit, in which rich and poor are alike implicated; and when He described the mighty transition from the one to the other, it was not a flowery path to heaven to which He pointed the eye of the Jewish ruler, to be trodden only by him and by his companions in fortune and in fine sentiment. It is the one and universal path for every son and daughter of Adam, who have all to undergo the same death, and to stand before the same judgment-seat, and to inherit their undying portion, whether of weal or of wo, in the same eternity. In the view and consideration of such mighty interests as these, we should give up the partial and insignificant distinctions of time and of society, between one member of the great human family and another. They are men and the souls of men that we have to deal with; and let it be our single aim to deal with them plainly, impressively, and faithfully.

It is true that ere we completed our lesson to the preachers of sermons, we behoved to advert to another principle, for which we have the sanction of apostolic example, even that of Paul, who was all things to all men, that he might gain some. But we must now hasten to address the hearers of sermons. It was saying more for the common people of Judea that they heard the Saviour gladly, than for the Scribes and Pharisees who heard him

with envy, prejudice, and opposition; and it is saying more for the common people of this country, that they hear the doctrine of Christ gladly, than for those learned who call that doctrine foolishness, for those men of taste who call it fanaticism, for those men of this world who call it a methodistical reverie, for those men of fashion and fine sentiment who shrink from the peculiarities of our faith, with all the disgust of irritated pride and offended delicacy. What the common people of Judea were in reference to the rulers of Judea, many of the common people of our day are in reference to the majority, we fear, of those who are to be met with in the walks of genteel and cultivated life—the scoffers and Sabbath breakers of the day, or the men perhaps who take a kind of religion along with them, but take it in moderation; who think that to strike the high tone of Christ and his apostles would be to carry the matter too far; who think that a great deal of what is said about sin and the sacrifice for sin is only meet for vulgar ears; who hear a sermon because it is decent to be exemplary; and who even read a sermon, and will read it to the end, if it carry them gently along through the rich and beauteous track of a polished composition; but who would be very ready to throw it aside, if it alarm too much their fears, or tell too much with energy upon their consciences. Now, we are willing to acquit those who are here present of all these unchristian peculiarities. We are willing to think that both the doctrine of Scripture and the language of Scripture are agreeable to you, and that you do not feel as if either the one or the other

could be carried too far; that there is no false taste, no lofty imagination about you, disposing you to resist the fulness or simplicity of the New Testament; and that the voice of the preacher never falls more sweetly upon your ears, than when he tells of the great things which the Saviour hath done for you. Now, it is well that, like the common people of our text, you hear the word with gladness; but we want to impress it upon you that something more than this is indispensable. We are jealous over you, and we trust with a godly jealousy. We fear that there are many who are satisfied with a mere liking for the sound of Christian doctrine in their ears, while utter strangers to the influence of Christian doctrine in their hearts; who think it enough that they have a taste for the faith, while they give no proof of obedience to the faith; who are mere hearers of the word, but not doers of the word; who feel as if the great use of a sermon was to hear it, and to judge of it, and if they are pleased, to approve of it, and then, with them, the great purpose for which said sermon was delivered is forthwith accomplished. There is no more of it. It is like a business settled and set by. The minister preached, and the people were pleased, and there is an end of the affair. They go back to their homes and their merchandise; and they go just as they came, carrying along with them not one trace of a living impression on their hearts, their principles, or their consciences. What they have heard may be talked of for some days, or remembered for some months; but if in a week or a fortnight after it, the question is put, Can you

tell of any actual or discernible fruit from this said sermon? any closer fellowship with the Saviour in consequence of it? any of the effects upon the man which never fail to accompany this fellowship? any dying unto sin? any fervent desires after righteousness? any pressing forward to the accomplishments of the new creature in Jesus Christ our Lord? any greater devotedness to the business of sanctification? any reformation of thieves or drunkards? any visible influence on the peace and order of families? any breaking down of that worldly spirit which is enough of itself to prove the enmity of man to his God, though there were no outward or declared profligacy in any of his actions? any dissolving of this enmity?—in a word, any one evidence that we can point our finger to, that this faith which is so much professed and so much talked of, is working by love?—is making the soul a fit habitation for God by His Spirit?—is bringing down the fulfilment of the promise upon it, even the Holy Ghost given to those who should believe? whereby the old man is destroyed, the body of sin is mortified, all former vanities have passed away; and the whole man, brought under the dominion of a new and a better principle, rises every day in purity and loveliness of character, to a meetness for the society of angels, for the presence of God, for the holy exercises of heaven, for the delights of an unfading immortality.

Apply these questions to a very fond and delighted hearer; and how often may we find, that the thing which gave so much pleasure to the itching ears of the man, has not had the weight of a straw

on the man himself! It plays like music upon his ear; but it does not enter with the subduing energy of conviction into his heart. Follow him through all the business of his varied relations at home or in society, and you see him to be substantially the same man as before,—with all his old principles and practices about him—living his wonted life of indulgence to himself, and at as great a distance as ever from the new habit of living to the Saviour who died for him. His soul persists in all the unmoved obstinacy of its alienation from God. It still bends to the earth, and is earthly. Time and the interests of time retain all their wonted ascendancy over it. The Judge of the secrets of the inner man sees his heart to be as alive as ever to the world, and as dead in affection as ever to the things which are above. O, he is still the old man, and still persisting in the deeds of it. The love of the world, which is opposite to the love of the Father, —the selfishness of diseased nature, which is opposite to the charity of the gospel, are still the supreme and the urging principles of his constitution; and they tell us that the voice of the preacher has had no more effect upon him, than the lullaby of a nurse's song.

We are forcibly carried to this train of reflection by the passage which lies before us. The common people heard our Saviour gladly; and what, we ask, became of these common people? To-day the mob of Jerusalem lift the hosannahs of a far-sounding popularity—a few days more, and they call out to crucify Him. His admirers became His murderers: and they who at one time heard

Him gladly, at another are gladly consenting unto His death. In a few years Jerusalem was given up to the avenging hand of the adversary; and these wicked men, who at one time hung with delight upon the preaching of the Saviour, were miserably destroyed. The plea that they had eaten and drunken in His presence, and that He had taught in their streets, was of no avail to them. It did not save them from the awful doom of the workers of iniquity; and they who at one time were the admirers and the delighted hearers of our Saviour's doctrine, were at another the victims of His wrath.

What was the principle of this wondrous revolution in their sentiments respecting Christ? We shall confine ourselves to one summary expression of it. The whole explanation of the matter lies here. They were willing enough for the time being to follow the Saviour; but they would not follow Him upon His terms, and when these terms came to be understood, they drew back from following Him. He had before said, that "he who followeth after me must forsake all;" and these Jewish hearers, when put to the trial, would not forsake their national vanity, would not forsake their worldly prospects of interest and aggrandisement, would not forsake their fond anticipations of a temporal prince to protect and to deliver them. While these agreeable prospects were full in their eye, they followed Him; but when these prospects vanished, and it came to denying themselves, and taking up their cross, they ceased from following Him. They listened to Him with delight when He told them

how Christ was greater than David; but why? because they looked forward to the earthly felicities of a still more prosperous reign, and a still prouder era in their history. It was all, it would appear, a matter of selfishness. They aspired after a share in the glories of their anticipated monarchy, and rejoiced in the near view of those privileges which they conceived to lie before them: but when, instead of privileges, it came to persecution,—when, instead of honour, it came to humiliation,—when, instead of soft and silken security, it came to sacrifices, to sufferings and self-denial,—they shrunk from it altogether; and, by falling away from the contest on earth, they forfeited the crown in heaven.

And there are other examples of the same thing in the Bible. It is said of Herod that he heard John the Baptist gladly, and that he observed him in many things. But he did not observe nor follow him in all things. He did not come up to the principle of forsaking all. He would not forsake his unhallowed connexion with his brother's wife; and when put to this proof of his self-denial, he imprisoned the prophet, and beheaded him.

The rich man who came with the question to our Saviour about the way to eternal life heard Him with pleasure, so long as He did not touch upon his favourite affection. There was no self-denial in keeping himself from those sins to which he felt no temptation; and he listened with patient satisfaction to the recital of those commandments, all of which he had been led by his circumstances or his natural disposition to keep from his youth up. But when the principle of "he that followeth after me

must forsake all," was applied to his besetting sin, he could not stand it. He could not find it in his heart to slay or to renounce this idol. He could not give up the service of the one master, or make an entire and unexcepted dedication of himself to the service of the other; and the same man who heard Him gladly at one part of His instructions, went away from the other question exceeding sorrowful, and withdrew his footsteps from that following of the Lord fully, by which alone we can obtain an entrance into the kingdom of God.

In the parable of the sower, there are men spoken of who heard the word with joy; but, as a proof that the joyful hearing of the word is one thing and the effectual receiving of it is another, these men fell away. Persecution came, and by and by they were offended. They at first resolved to follow the Saviour; but the term of forsaking all was what they had not strength of purpose, nor depth of principle for acting up to. They gave way in the hour of temptation; and, rather than forsake their ease or their life or their fortune, they gave up all part and lot in the inheritance.

But, can there be a more striking example of this than at the preaching of the apostles after the resurrection? All Jerusalem was filled with their doctrine, and that doctrine was listened to with indulgence and pleasure. It is true that the interested men took the alarm at it; but set aside these, and we are told that they were in favour with all the people. If an apostle preached, he was at no loss for a multitude, and an approving multitude too, to gather around him, and hang upon him with

admiration and delight. Had there been as many Christians as delighted hearers among them, Jerusalem would have been the most Christian city that ever flourished on the face of the earth. It looked so fair and so promising, when every street poured forth its multitudes, and they all ran together to the apostles, glorifying God for all which they heard and saw. Some were added to the church of such as should be saved. But they were a mere handful to the population of the devoted city. They were a mere gleaning among that number who kept in awe the high-priest and the council of Jerusalem, and restrained their violence against the first ministers of the New Testament. Yes, they were favourite ministers at that time, men of vast acceptance and popularity; and, if to hear the word gladly with the ear were the same thing as to receive the influence of that word into the heart, the vengeance of a rejected Saviour might have been averted from Jerusalem. But, alas! the hearers of that time must have been like many of the hearers of the present day. They heard, and they were pleased; but they would not forsake all to follow. They were afraid of excommunication, and they clung by their synagogues. They would not forsake the approbation of their priests, and the protection of their rulers. They clung by the superstitions, by the iniquities, by the bigotries of Jerusalem; and with Jerusalem they perished.

What does all this teach us? Let us come to the application. The gospel under which we sit has two great articles. By the one, we are invited to faith; by the other, we are called to repentance.

By the one, we are offered the remission of our sins; by the other, we are called upon for the renunciation of our sins. By the one, we are told of a salvation, of which, if we accept, we shall be reconciled and taken into full acceptance with God. By the other, we are told of a salvation, of which, if we accept, we shall be regenerated by the operation of the Spirit of God. By the one, we are graciously assured that, if we turn to Christ as into a stronghold, we shall be safe; and the storm of the Divine wrath will utterly pass us by. By the other, we are solemnly warned that, in turning to Christ, we must turn from our iniquities—else if the Judge find us in these on the great day of reckoning, the fury both of a violated law and an insulted gospel will be let loose upon us, and we borne off as by a whirlwind to the horrors of an undone eternity. Now, the whole secret of such an exhibition as was made by the common people at Jerusalem, and as may still be realized by the people of the present day, is, that they like the one article, they dislike the other,—glad enough to take all that God offers, but not so glad to perform all that God requires,—giving their delighted consent to the one, refusing it to the other,—and thus running with delight after those men of popularity and acceptance who tell them of the faith of the New Testament, but falling away with disaffection and distaste when told of the repentance of the New Testament. They are joyful hearers of the word; but our question is, are they the obedient doers of it? O, it is pleasant to be told of heaven; and, amidst the agitations of this earthly wilderness, to have the eye

carried forward to that place of quietness. But are you willing to take, or rather are you actually taking the prescribed road to heaven—though that road should lead you through manifold trials and manifold tribulations?—It is soothing to listen to the preacher's voice, when he tells you to rest in the sufficiency of the Saviour. Are you building any thing upon this foundation? If you rest on the sufficiency of Christ, you will receive of that sufficiency. He will make His grace sufficient for you; and, perfecting His strength in your weakness, He will make you run with delight in the way of new obedience.—It is delightful to be told of the privileges of the Christian faith. Are you proving yourselves to be in the faith? It is not a name, but a principle. It is not a thing to be merely talked of. It is like the kingdom of heaven to which it carries you—not in word, but in power; and then only does it work with power, when it works by love and keeps the commandments.—It is indeed a welcome sound upon a sinner's ear that he is justified by the righteousness of Christ. O, it is a faithful saying; and the only plea upon which we have access with confidence to God. But he who is justified is also sanctified, is another faithful saying; and let us come to close questioning with you—are you, or are you not, in the strength of God's promised Spirit, making the business of your sanctification a daily and hourly and ever-doing business?—You like to follow the minister who preaches Christ; and, in going after him, you have forsaken all the legalists, all the mere men of morality, all the self-sufficient expounders of that right-

eousness which is by the law. But what we ask is—do you follow Christ, and that with an entire devotedness to Him and to Him only? And, in following after Him, do you forsake all? In turning to Him, do you turn from your iniquities? In yielding yourselves up unto His service, do you renounce the service of sin and of the world?—for, if not, you are like the common people of Jerusalem, and you will share in the judgment that came over them. You may hear gladly; but what does it avail, if you do not follow faithfully? Jerusalem which they lived in was destroyed; and they were destroyed along with it. The world which you live in will be destroyed also; and when the Judge cometh, the plea which many of the lovers of orthodoxy may lift up, will not serve them—"Lord, we have eaten and drunken of thy sacraments, and pleasant to our souls was the voice of thy messengers." But then will I answer to them, "I never knew you; depart from me all ye that work iniquity."

But, in sounding the alarm, it should be our care that it reach far enough; and we apprehend of this denunciation that we have now uttered against the children of iniquity—that many are the consciences, even of those now present, who may not be rightly or fully affected by it. When we speak of those who work iniquity, to the fair and passable men of society, they never once think of including themselves in this description; but their thoughts go abroad to thieves and drunkards and defrauders; and, applying to them the declaration of Scripture, that "they who do such things shall not inherit the kindgom of God," they lull their own spirits into a

deep slumber. But we fall short of our aim, if we do not awaken them too out of this fatal security; if we do not break up this prevalent delusion; if we do not reach conviction into other hearts than those of gross and notorious offenders. We look not for theft or drunkenness among men of honour and decency and respect in their neighbourhood—yet would we open their eyes too to their state of spiritual nakedness, and tell them how it is that even they are workers of iniquity. To them belongs that most damning of all iniquity, the iniquity of a heart alienated from God. It is the heart wherewith He has principally to do; and "give me thy heart" is the first and greatest of His commandments. The evil things which come out of it may be more or less visible to the eye of the world; but He does not need to look to the stream, for His penetrating eye reaches to the fountain-head. The world may not see you to be a thief or a drunkard; but He sees you, and takes note of you as an enemy of His. He sees in that heart of yours, the hourly, and the habitual guilt of spiritual idolatry. He sees the whole current of its affections and wishes to be away from Himself, and fully directed to the vanities and interests of the world. He sees the praise of men more sought after than is His praise; and, with the outside of plausibility which you maintain before the eye of your fellows, He, the discerner of your thoughts and intents, may see how other things are more loved and followed than God. It is the heart that He looks to; and well does He see its bent and its tendency, through all the am-

biguities by which you deceive and satisfy your own unfaithful consciences. He takes knowledge of it when you are too busy with your own way and your own counsel to take knowledge of it yourselves. He follows it through the secrecy of all its hidden movements; nor does it escape His notice when it disowns Him, and goes in quest of other gods—when it casts Him off and worships idols—when it renounces the true God, and makes a God of wealth, a God of vanity, a God of pleasure, and as many more Gods as there are allurements from Himself in this deceitful world. Not a worker of iniquity, because you do not steal! Why, you rob God of the property which belongs to Him, of His own rightful property in the hearts and affections of His own children. Not a worker of iniquity, because, in the form or the outward matter of it, you break not the sixth or the eighth commandment! Why, you live in habitual violation of the first and greatest commandment, which is, "love the Lord thy God with all thy soul, and strength, and mind." Not a worker of iniquity, because you do nothing which the world can point its finger to! Because you escape the finger of the world, does it follow that you can escape the eye of God? He sees you to be a rebel against Himself; and, with that heart of yours turned to its own vanities, with neither the enjoyment of God for its object, nor the love of God for its principle; be assured that it is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked, and is fully set in you to do that which is evil.

The maxim, then, of forsaking all to follow after Christ, reaches a great deal farther than to the

notoriously profligate. It must go round among all the sons and daughters of Adam. It is not confined to the visible doings of the hand, but carries its authority over the whole man, and claims more especially an absolute dominion among the affections and wishes and tastes of the inner man. He who hears gladly to-day, and lies or steals or defrauds to-morrow, is not the only man that we are aiming at. He who hears gladly to-day, and to-morrow gives his soul to any of the perishable idols of time, instead of devoting it with all its longings and energies to God, is fully included in the lesson which we are now giving to you. Delighted with the sermon, we grant you, but not one inch of progress made toward the clean heart and the right spirit. Lulled, Sabbath after Sabbath, as if by the sound of a pleasant song, or of one who can play well upon an instrument—and yet the old man persisting in all the unsubdued obstinacy of his deep and inborn principles. Rejoicing once a-week in the house of God, as if it were the gate of heaven—yet the whole week long, giving his entire heart to the world, and resting all his security upon the world's wealth, and the world's enjoyments. Running after gospel ministers, and sitting in all the complacency of approbation under them—and yet an utter stranger to the devotedness, to the spirituality, to the close walk, and the godly spirit of the altogether-Christian. O my brethren, it bids so flattering to hear the city bells, and to see every house pouring forth its family of worshippers —to look upon the avenue which leads to the house of prayer, and see it all in a glow with the crowd

and bustle of passengers—to enter the church, and see every eye fastened attentively on the man of God, as he tells of the high matters of salvation, and presses home the preparations of eternity upon an arrested audience. O, if the charmed ear were a true and unfailing index to the subdued heart, the business of the minister would go on so prosperously! But there is a power of resistance within that is above his exertions and beyond them —there is a spirit working in the children of disobedience which no power of human eloquence can lay—there is an obstinate alienation from God, which God alone can subdue; and, unless He make a willing people in the day of His power, the influence of the preacher's lesson will die away with the music of his voice—the old man will be carried out as vigorous and entire as he was carried in—the word spoken may play upon the fancy, but it will not reach the deeply-seated corruption which lies in the affections and the will—the seriousness which sits so visible on every countenance, will vanish into nothing in half an hour—the men of the world, and the things of the world, will engross and occupy the room that is now taken up with something like Christianity—and all will be dissipated into a thing of nought, when you go to your shops and your farms and your families and your market-places.

But we must now draw to a close, and will lay before you a few things in the way of practical application.

I. First, then, we have no quarrel with you

because you are of the number of those who hear gladly. This is so far well. It is one of the deadliest symptoms of those who perish, that to them the preaching of the cross is foolishness. If such be your indifference or aversion to the word of God, if such be your contempt for the opportunities of hearing it—that, now when they are brought week after week within your reach, you will nevertheless turn in distaste and dissatisfaction away—if you prefer a Sabbath on the way-side, or a Sabbath in the fields, or a Sabbath in sordid indolence and dissipation at home, to a Sabbath in the solemn assembly of worshippers—Then will it sorely aggravate your condemnation in the great day of account, that you refused to listen to the word when the word was brought nigh unto you —that, rather than hear the word by which you and your families might have been saved, you chose to perish for lack of knowledge, even that knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ which is life everlasting—that, when the ministers of the Most High lifted their beseeching voice, you regarded them not—that you preferred taking your own pleasure now, reckless of the awful day of account and of punishment that is to come afterwards, even that day when the Judge from heaven shall appear in flaming fire, "to take vengeance on those who know not God and who obey not the gospel of his Son Jesus Christ, when they shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his power." Better than this surely is it that you should hear the word gladly, and that you should rejoice when friends and companions say, "Let us go up to the house

of God." We have no quarrel, then, we repeat, with your being of the number of those who are the glad hearers of the word. Are there any here present who recollect the day when the language of the gospel was offensive to them, but who now listen to it with eagerness and delight? A very promising symptom most assuredly; and it may evidence the beginning of a good work which God may carry forward and bring to perfection.

II. But, secondly, though your hearing gladly be a promising symptom, it is not an infallible one. The common people of Jerusalem heard gladly; and we need not repeat the awful disaster and ruin which, in the course of a few years, overtook the families of that common people—so that their old, and their middle-aged, and their little ones, were miserably destroyed. Herod heard gladly. The men who fell away in the parable of the sower heard gladly, and you may hear gladly yet fall short of the kingdom of God. "Be not high minded but fear." "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." The apostle tells how far a man might proceed in the characteristics and evidences of a seeming Christianity, and yet fall irrecoverably away. One of these characteristics is a taste for the good word of God; but this, so far from being of any avail to the presumptuous backslider, serves the more to fix and to aggravate his doom—the doom of a perdition from which there is no possibility of a recall, it being impossible, he tells us, "to renew them again unto repentance." Keep fast then what you have gotten, and strengthen the things which remain and are ready to die.

III. But though to hear gladly be not an infal-

lible symptom, yet to hear the whole truth gladly is a much more promising symptom than only to hear part of the truth gladly. We fear that it is this partial liking for the word which forms the whole amount of their affection for it, with the great majority of professing Christians. They like one part; but they do not like another. Some like to hear of the privileges of the gospel; but they do not like to hear of the precepts of the gospel, and that the soul in whom Christ is formed the hope of glory, will purify itself even as Christ is pure. This partial liking, so far from a promising symptom, we count to be a very dangerous one. It is dividing Christ. It is putting asunder the things which God hath joined. It is giving the lie to His testimony; and making our own taste and our own inclination take the precedency of God's word and of God's way. Make it a high point of duty to listen with equal reverence and satisfaction to all God's communications. Do you listen with delight to the minister, when he tells you to follow after Christ? Listen with equal delight to the minister, when he tells you that in following after Christ you must forsake all. If this truth offend you merely when it is spoken, how much more will it offend you when you have a call for its being acted on?—and thus will you fall precisely under that description of hearers, who hear with joy, but when temptation comes, by and by they are offended. Do you listen with delight to a sermon upon the privileges of faith, and how that all who have it shall inherit the kingdom? Listen with equal delight to a sermon on the properties and influences of faith; and when it tells you how it is a faith which worketh, working by love, purifying

the heart, overcoming the world. Do you listen with delight to a sermon on the freeness of grace; and when it tells you how it is offered to all, and that all who will may take of it without money and without price? Listen with equal delight to a sermon on the power and efficacy of grace—telling how it frees all who are under it from the dominion of sin, how it worketh mightily in the souls of believers, how it raises them to newness of life, and strengthens them for all the duties and performances of the new creature—not only teaching all men, but enabling all men who lay hold of it, to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present evil world. It looks as if it were to guard us against this partial liking for the word of God, that these two great articles of Christianity, what man receives from God and what God requires of man, under the dispensation of the gospel,—that both of these are often placed together, side by side, within the enclosure of one and the same verse; so as both to be taken up at one glance of the eye by him who reads the verse, or expressed at one breath by him who utters it. The call of the Saviour at the commencement of Mark is, "Repent and believe the gospel." The apostolic description of the great subjects of preaching is "repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ." The office of the ascended Saviour is to "give repentance and the remission of sins." The privileges of the believer are, that to him "there is no condemnation;" and he walketh not after the flesh but after the Spirit." As many as receive Christ, we are told, receive along with him "power to walk as God's children."

They who are in Christ we are again told are "new creatures." And lastly do we read of God being faithful and just—not only "to forgive our sins but to cleanse us from all our unrighteousness." Such passages are innumerable. Let us have our eye alike open upon them all. Let us proceed upon them all—combining delight in the securities of the Christian faith, with diligence in the Christian practice.

IV. But lastly, if it do not follow that because a man is a delighted hearer of the word, he is therefore an obedient doer of it, how is he to become one? What is there which can bring relief to this melancholy helplessness? How wretched to think that the impression, so quick and lively in the house of God, should be so easily put to flight out of it; and should fall away into forgetfulness, when brought into actual collision with the influences of the world. The man's warmth and his elevation, and his swelling purposes of better things, look so promising; but bring him to the trial, and it all turns out like the vapouring of a coward. The one shows himself in the day of battle—the other in the day of temptation. He goes to his family after a sermon that he has heard, and becomes peevish, though one fruit of the Spirit be gentleness—he goes to an entertainment and becomes luxurious, though one fruit of the Spirit be temperance—he goes to a company and becomes censorious, though one fruit of the Spirit be the love that worketh no ill. In a word, he goes to any one scene of the world; and he loses all sense and feeling of the ever-present God—though the solemn requirement under which he lives is to do all things to His glory. Are we not speak-

ing to your own experience; and may not the personal remembrance of every one of you spare us the task of any further argument, when we assert that the glow of a warm and affecting impression is one thing, and the sturdiness of an enduring principle is another?

We again then recur to the question, how shall we give the property of endurance to that which in time past has been so perishable and so momentary? The strength of your own natural purposes, it would appear, cannot do it. The power of argument cannot do it. The tongue of the minister, though he spake with the eloquence of an angel, cannot do it; and unless some power above and beyond all these be made to rest on you, he may speak to the delight of a crowded assembly, and it will be of no more avail than if he lifted up his voice in the wilderness. But you have met together in the name of one who has promised to be in the midst of you; and He can do it. He alone can deposit in your hearts that seed which remaineth; and come down upon you with an unction from the Holy One never to be obliterated. What He puts in you will abide in you; and it will enable you to stand amid the conflicts of the world, and the rudest shock of its temptations. If the Spirit of Christ be in you, then greater will be He that is in you than he that is in the world; and let your experience of the past, and the feeling of your former helplessness, shut you up unto the faith of Him. If you commit yourself in faith to Him, He will not fail you. His promises are yea and amen; and if they are not realized upon you, it is because you do not believe in them, because you do not depend on

them, because you do not wait and pray for the performance of them. Mark here, my brethren, the efficacy and the indispensableness of prayer. It is the link which cements and binds together the sermon of the minister, with its living and practical effect on the consciences and conduct of the people. Of such essential importance is it, that the apostles made as great account of prayer, as they did of the ministry of the word; and so they gave themselves wholly to both. But for prayer, all our anticipations of a great Christian blessing in the midst of this people and from the services of this Church will come to mockery. It is right that these means should be provided; but the whole enterprise will be a miserable abortion, if we devolve not the work upon God—so as both to seek from Him the blessing, and give to Him all the glory of it. More especially, if at all in earnest about your personal Christianity, I would have you to understand—that, without prayer, prompted by a sense of your own helplessness, and a confidence in the sufficiency of Christ Jesus as your strength and your sanctifier, it will be impossible to realize it. The way is to make an hourly and habitual commitment of yourself to Him; and He will keep in hourly and habitual safety that which is so committed. He hath obtained for you a great blessing, and to which all of you are most welcome, in having purchased forgiveness for you; but, in the fulness of His treasury, there is still another blessing in store for all who believe on Him. He came to bless every one of you by turning you from your iniquities. Keep closely and constantly by Him in faith; and He will keep closely and constantly by you with the power

of His grace—giving not only mercy to pardon, but grace to help in every time of need. He will carry you in safety through the concerns and companies of the world. He overcame the world Himself; and He will enable you to forsake all, and to overcome it also. Abide in Him, and the promise is that He will abide in you. Separate from Him, you become a withered branch without fruit and without loveliness. But, abiding in Him, you are formed into His image—you rise in the likeness of His pure and perfect example—you will at all times hear gladly, but not after the example of the common people of Judea. Yours will be a sincere thirst after the milk of His word, not that you may be pleased with the taste of it, but that you may grow thereby—and thus will you give evidence both to God and man of your interest in the Saviour, by being not merely the hearers of the word but the doers also.

We now proceed to the collection for the funds of this our new undertaking; and, in order to engage your affections the more to our cause, we should like that you fully and precisely understood the object of it. The place of worship in which we are now assembled for the first time, is not adequately described to you, by its being merely told, that, like other and ordinary chapels heretofore, it forms an addition to the means of Christian instruction in or about Edinburgh. It has a far more special destination than this; and such as we should like to see extended over town and country, till there was not only Sabbath-room enough, but week-day service enough for one and all of the families

of our land. It is a church then erected, mainly and primarily, for the accommodation of the people who reside within the limits of the district in which it is placed. They have the choice of its seats in the first instance; and our only regret is, that till government do its duty, we shall not be able to afford them at rents so low, as to admit of their being taken in greater numbers, and, if possible, in household pews, not only for the men and women, but even for the children of the working classes —that the people might come, not merely by individuals, but in whole families to the house of God; and the spectacle be again realized in towns, which might still be witnessed in country parishes, where high and low meet together, and the congregation, though sprinkled over with a few of rank and of opulence, is chiefly made up of our men of handicraft and of hard labour. There is none we think of correct moral taste, and whose heart is in its right place, that will not rejoice in such a spectacle, as far more pleasing in itself, and, if only universal in our churches, far more indicative of a healthful state of the community, than the wretched system of the present day, when the gospel is literally sold to the highest bidders among the rich, and not preached to the poor. And the melancholy consequence is, the irreligion, the ignorance, the reckless habits, and prostrate morality of a neglected population—of a population at the same time sunk both in comfort and character, only because they are neglected; and who would nobly repay, as our experience in this place abundantly testifies, any justice that was done, or any attentions that were rendered to them. The process of our operations is

an exceedingly simple one. Instead of leaving this church to fill as it may from all parts of the town, we first hold out the seats that we have to dispose of, at such prices as we can afford to its own parish families—which families, at the same time, have previously opened their doors, and given their welcome to those ministerial yet household services, those visits of Christian charity to the sick and the dying, those labours for the best because the spiritual interests of themselves and their little ones, wherewith they are incessantly plied through the week; and, in consequence of which, it is our fond expectation and desire, that the attention of the house-going minister will be followed up by the attendance of a church-going people. We do hope that this plain statement will recommend itself to your liberality; and that we shall be helped by you to clear away the debt, and to overcome the difficulties which still attach to our undertaking. The original subscribers look for no return, no remuneration to themselves. Theirs has been an unreserved gift; and not one farthing of repayment, whether in principal or interest, has ever been looked for by any of them. By the generosity of their individual offerings, the main expense of the erection has been defrayed; and, for the liquidation of the remaining expense, we now cast ourselves on the collective offerings of those who desire to see a good cause placed on the footing of a permanent and secure establishment, and freed from all the embarrassments of a still unfinished and unpaid-for operation. Our fond wish for Edinburgh and for its environs is—that, district after district, new churches may arise and old ones be thrown open

to their own parish families, till not one house remains which has not within its walls some stated worshipper in one or other of our Christian assemblies; and not one individual can be pointed to, however humble and unknown, who has not some man of God for his personal acquaintance, some Christian minister for his counsellor and friend.

The afternoon service is postponed till evening; and the reason of this postponement may be well called a very singular one, on which certainly we were not at all counting, when we had resolved to open our church this day—an annular eclipse of the sun, and where the greatest amount of darkness would happen in the very middle of the exercise, or precisely at three o'clock; and so we fear as both to incommode the minister, and to disturb the congregation. We are unwilling to let this extraordinary event pass without some religious improvement; and what work or manifestation of Nature's God, who at the same time is the God of Christianity—sitting on a throne of grace as well as on the throne of creation and providence—the God who, in the language of the apostle's prayer in the book of Acts, "made heaven and earth and sea and all that is therein,"—what exhibition of this wonder-working God is not capable of being turned to the account of practical godliness? We should like you then to recognise it as one and the same lesson—that He who has established so much certainty in Nature, most true to Himself, hath established the like certainty in Revelation; that the one economy will be characterized by the same unchangeableness as the other—insomuch that, if we

meet with so much constancy, so much to be relied upon in the works of God, there is at least as great a constancy and as much to be firmly and fully relied upon in the word of God. The covenant of the rainbow which marks the dispersion of the clouds, and clearing up of the weather, is not more sure, than that covenant of grace which forms the great charter of a Christian's hope, and of which we are told in the Bible that it is ordered in all things and sure. The eclipse of this day is one of the most rare and marvellous description, not what is termed a partial and not a total but an annular eclipse, in which the moon passes not over the edge, but centrally or almost centrally over the sun's disk —and so that, instead of covering that disk altogether and making the eclipse a total one, it leaves, and for four minutes only, a little ring of the solar orb peering out on all sides of the moon's darkened hemisphere—causing a fine and beauteous circle of light, all that is left for the brief space of four minutes to lighten up our world. The marvellous thing is, that all this should be known to men beforehand; that astronomers can tell the whole that is to happen with such unfailing accuracy; that within a second of time they can announce when it is that the darkness will make its first entrance on the south-west edge of the sun, and when it is to a precise second that the last remainder of darkness will pass away from the north-east edge of it—and when and how long it is that the golden circuit will continue, of one delicate and unbroken line re-entering upon itself, and so completing for a few evanescent minutes an entire orb of luminousness in the heavens. It may well be marvelled at—

the certainty of the science of man, or of him who is but the observer of the phenomenon. But remember well, that in order to this, there must be a previous certainty—the unchangeable certainty of Him who is the Creator of the phenomenon; and the unchangeableness of whose ordinances in the heavens, is the sure token and demonstration of the like unchangeableness of His purposes in the word. The calendar of prophecy is in every way as sure, as the almanac whether of history or of nature; and, in the unerring fulfilments of both, we may read alike the immutability and the faithfulness of God; of Him who hath said it, and shall He not do it?—and with whom is no variableness, nor shadow of turning.

Think not, my brethren, that we entertain you with any fancy of our own. In Psalm cxix. 89, we are told of God's constancy in the heavens, being the sure guarantee of a like constancy in the word. Nay, my brethren, the one has a more unviolable constancy than the other—for heaven and earth shall pass away; but the word of God endureth for ever, and shall not pass away. What an emphasis then does it give to the lesson we have been labouring to urge, of attention, solemn and steadfast attention to that word—what firm, what unfaltering dependence should it establish in the mind of the believer, when he rests on the word of promise as an anchor of the soul both sure and steadfast—and with what a fearful looking for and certainty of the coming judgment should it fill the heart of the impenitent, when he thinks of the threatenings of God being as sure as His promises; of the laws of the divine

government being in every way as certain of fulfilment, as the laws of nature which is the divine workmanship; and more especially, when he thinks of the law of revelation and the law of conscience with all the power and terror of their denunciations, against the children of iniquity—when he thinks of these in connexion with the saying of the Saviour, that "Heaven and earth shall pass away but not one jot or one tittle of the law shall fail." When you look then to the spectacle of this day, lift up your heads ye faithful disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ and rejoice—for as sure or surer than the prediction of which you are now to witness the accomplishment, is the glorious prediction of Holy Writ that the day of your restoration draweth nigh: And O take warning ye careless and stout-hearted who are far from righteousness—for as sure or surer than that on this day the sun in the firmament will be shrouded in blackness, is the announcement of the apostle Peter who tells us of another day "when the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also, and the works that are therein, shall be burnt up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness; looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens, being on fire, shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?" May you all be enabled to say with well grounded confidence in the language of the next verse, "Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness."

ON THE SUPERIOR BLESSEDNESS OF THE GIVER TO THAT OF THE RECEIVER:

SERMON,

PREACHED FIRST FOR

A FEMALE SOCIETY

IN DUNFERMLINE, IN 1814;

THEN FOR

AN ORPHAN HOSPITAL;

AND LASTLY, FOR

THE SOCIETY

OF

THE SONS OF THE CLERGY

IN GLASGOW, IN APRIL, 1815.

PREFATORY NOTICE.

THE three different conclusions of this sermon, mark the three different occasions on which it was preached; and also the sentiments of the author, in regard to the distinct objects which he was called upon to advocate. He may remark, that, after the experience of twenty-four years, he should feel disinclined to plead for the first of these objects, and even be doubtful in regard to the second—which he thinks occupies a midway or ambiguous place between the cases which might, and those which ought not to be provided for by public institutions.

SERMON XII.

ON THE SUPERIOR BLESSEDNESS OF THE GIVER TO THAT OF THE RECEIVER.

"I have showed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak; and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive." —Acts xx. 35.

John, at the end of his gospel, spoke of the multitude of other things which Jesus did, and which he could not find room for in the compass of His short history. Now, what is true of the doings of our Saviour, I hold to be equally true of the sayings of our Saviour. There are many thousands of these sayings not recorded. The four gospels were written within some years after His death, and though I have no doubt of the promise being accomplished upon the apostles, that the Spirit would bring all things to their remembrance, in virtue of which promise, we have all things told of Jesus necessary for our guidance here, and our salvation hereafter—yet I have as little doubt, when I think of the length and frequency of His conversations with the people around Him, that many, and very many of the gracious words which fell from His mouth, have not been transmitted to us in any written history whatever. They may have been kept alive by tradition for a few years. They

may have been handed from one to another by mere oral communication. There is no doubt that they served every purpose for which they were uttered—but, in the lapse of one or two generations, they ceased to be talked of, and have now vanished from all earthly remembrance.

But there is one, and only one, of these sayings, which, though not recorded in any of the gospels, has escaped the fate of all the rest. In the course of its circulation among the disciples of that period, it reached the apostle Paul, and he has thought fit to preserve it. It seems to have obtained a general currency among Christians; for he speaks of it to the elders of Ephesus, as if they had heard it before. He quotes it as a saying known to them as well as to himself. We have no doubt that it was held in reverence, and referred to, and might have been talked of for many years, in the churches. But it would at length have sunk into forgetfulness, with the crowd of other unrecorded sayings, had not Paul caught hold of it in its progress to oblivion; and, by placing it within the confines of written history, he has made it imperishable. It has got within the four corners of that book, of which it is said, "If any man take away from the words of it, he shall be accursed." He was the Son of God who uttered it; and it is striking enough, that, when unnoticed and unrecorded by all the evangelists, the apostle of the Gentiles, born out of due time, was the instrument of transmitting it to posterity. Precious memorial! There was no chance of its ever being lost to the Christian church, for all Scripture is given by inspiration of God; and

without it the volume of inspiration would not have been completed. But surely the very circumstances of its being overlooked by the professed historians of our Saviour—of its being left for a time to fluctuate among all the chances, and all the uncertainties of verbal communications—of its being selected by the revered apostle of the Gentiles, from among the crowd of similar sayings which were suffered to perish for ever from the memory of the world—of his putting his hand upon it, and arresting its march to that forgetfulness to which it was so fast hastening—All these have surely the effect of endearing it the more to our hearts, and should lead the thoughtful Christian to look upon the words of my text, with a more tender and affecting veneration.

In discoursing from these words, I shall first direct your attention to those Christians who occupy such a condition of life that they may give; and, secondly, to those Christians who occupy such a condition of life that they must receive.

I will not attempt to draw the precise boundary between these two conditions. Each individual among you must determine the question for himself. It is not for me to sit in judgment upon your circumstances; but know that a day is coming, when all these secrets shall be laid open—and when the God who seeth every heart shall tell with unerring discernment, whether the selfishness of diseased nature or the charity of the gospel, had the rule over it.

I. First, then, as to those Christians who oc-

cupy such a condition of life that they may give. It is more blessed for them to give than to receive. (1.) Because in so doing, they are like unto God; and to be formed again after his image, is the great purpose of the dispensation we sit under. We have nothing that we did not receive, but we cannot say so of God. He is the unfailing fountain out of which every thing flows. All originates in Him. A mighty tide of communication from God to His creatures, has been kept up incessantly from the first hour of creation. It flows without intermission. It spreads over the whole extent of the universe He has formed. It carries light, and sustenance, and enjoyment, through the wide dominions of Nature and of Providence. It reaches to the very humblest individual among His children. There is not one shred or fragment in the awful immensity of His works which is overlooked by Him; and, wonderful to tell, the same God whose arm is abroad over all worlds, has His eye fastened attentively upon every one of us, compasses all our goings, gives direction to every footstep, sustains us and holds us together through every minute of our existence—and, at the very time that we are living in forgetfulness of Him, walking in the counsel of our own hearts, and after the sight of our own eyes—is the universal Creator at the right hand of each and of all of us, to give us every breath which we draw, and every comfort which we enjoy.

Oh! but you may think it is nothing to Him, to open His hand liberally. He may give and give, and be as full as ever. He loses nothing by communication. But we cannot part with any

thing to another, without depriving ourselves. Such an objection as this proceeds from an unscriptural view of God. In the eye of a cold natural theology, He is regarded as a Being who has nothing in Him answering to that which we feel in ourselves—when, by a laborious exercise of self-denial, we perform some great and painful act of liberality. The theology of nature, or rather of the schools, makes an orderly distribution of the attributes of God; and, conceiving His power to be some kind of physical and resistless energy, it also conceives that He can accomplish every deed of benevolence however exalted it may be without so much as the feeling of a sacrifice. Now this I think is not the lesson of the bible. He who hath seen the Father, and is alone competent to declare Him, gives me a somewhat different view of what I venture to call the constitution of the Deity. Does not He tell us, that to be kind to our friends is no great matter; and then He bids us be kind to our enemies, and upon what principle?—That we may be like unto God. Now in the exercise of kindness to enemies, there is something going on in our minds totally different, from what goes on in the exercise of kindness to friends; and I do not see the significancy of the argument at all, unless you grant me, that there must be a difference corresponding to this in the mind of the Deity. In the exercise of kindness to the man who hates you, there is a preference of his good to the indulgence of your own resentment—there is a victory over the natural tendencies of your constitution—there is a struggling with these tendencies—there is an act of forbearance—there is a

triumph of the principle of love, over a painful and urgent sense of provocation. Now, if in all this we are like unto God, must there not be something similar to all this in the benevolence of God? Or, in other words, there must be something in His character, corresponding to that which imparts a character of sublime elevation, to the meek and persevering charity of an injured Christian.

But again. When we are told that God *so* loved the world, as to send His only begotten Son into it, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life—what is the meaning of the emphatic *so?* It means nothing at all, if God, in the act of giving up His Son to death, did not make the same kind of sacrifice with the parent, who, amid the agonies of his struggling bosom, surrenders his only child at some call of duty or of patriotism. If it was at the bidding of God that Abraham entertained strangers, this was some proof of his love to Him. But it was a much higher proof of it that he so loved Him, as to be in readiness at His requirement, to offer up Isaac. Now there is something analogous to this in God. It proves His love to men, that He opens His hand, and feeds them all out of the exuberance which flows from it; but it is a higher proof of love that He so loved them as to give up His only begotten Son in their behalf.

And the argument loses all its impression, if God did not experience a something in His mind, corresponding to that which is felt by an earthly parent—when, keeping all the struggles of his natural tenderness under the control of principle,

he gives up his son at the impulse of some pure and lofty requirement. Dismiss then my brethren all your scholastic conceptions of the Deity; and keep by that warm and affecting view of Him, that we have in the Bible. For if we do not, we will lose the impression of many of its most moving arguments; and our hearts will remain shut against its most powerful and pathetic representations of the character of God. To come back then upon this objection, that it is nothing to God to open His hand liberally, for He may give and give and be as full as ever. And does God make no sacrifice in the act of giving unto you? A pure and unfallen angel would not detract from the praises of His Creator—by language such as this. And what are you? A rebel to His laws, who will yet persist in saying, that God, by feeding you with His bounty, is making no sacrifice. Why, He is holding you up though you be a spectacle injurious to His honour. He is grieved with you every day, and yet every day He loads you with His benefits. Every sinner is an offence to Him, and what restrains Him from sweeping the offence away from the face of His creation altogether. It is of His mercies that you are not consumed—that He still bears with you—that He keeps you in life and in all that is necessary to life—that He holds on with you a little longer and a little longer—that He plies you with warnings and opportunities; and brings the voice of a beseeching God to bear upon you, calling you to turn and be reconciled and live—What! Has He never for your sakes, given up any thing that is dear and valuable to Himself? Did

not He give up His Son to the death for you? All your gifts to the poor are nothing to this. When Abraham lifted up the knife over his son Isaac—he felt that he was making a mightier and more painful sacrifice, than by all his alms-deeds and hospitalities. God had compassion on the parental feelings of Abraham, and He spared them. But He spared not His own Son. He gave Him up for us all. And shall we when we give up a trifling proportion of our substance to the relief of our poorer brethren, talk of the sacrifice we are making—as if there was nothing like it in the benevolence of God? Talk not then of your deprivations and your sacrifices. But "be perfect even as your Father in heaven is perfect."

Under this particular, I have one practical direction to come forward with. When you do an act of benevolence, think of the extent of the sacrifice you have made by it. It is a delightful exercise to be kind among people who have a sense of your kindness—to give away money, if you get an ample return of gratitude back again—to pay a visit of tenderness to the poor family, who load you with their acknowledgments and their blessings—when you are received with the smile of welcome; and soothed by the soft accents of the widow who prays for a reward upon you, or of the children who hail you as an angel of mercy. Oh, it is easy to move gently along, through such scenes and families as these. But have a care, that you are not ministering all the while to your own indulgence and your own vanity; for then verily I say unto you "you have your reward." The

charity of the gospel is not the fine and exquisite feeling of poetry. It is a sturdy and enduring principle. It carries you through the rough and discouraging realities of life, and it enables you to stand them; and it is only, my brethren, when you can be kind in spite of ingratitude—when you can give to the poor man, not because he thanks you, but because he needs it—when you can be unwearied in well-doing, amid all the bitterness of envy, and all the growlings of discontent—Then, and then only is it, that you endure hardness as a good soldier of Christ Jesus; or can be called the children of the Highest, who is kind to the unthankful and the evil, and sendeth down his rain on the just and on the unjust.

(2.) It is more blessed to give than to receive—for to give as a Christian, is to part with that which is temporal, and to show a preference for that which is eternal. By an alms-deed you give up part of this world's goods. By a piece of service, you give up a part of this world's ease. By an act of civility, you give up to another that time which might have been employed in the prosecution of some design or interest of your own. But, lest I flatter you into a delusive security, I again recur to the question "What is the extent of the sacrifice?" For I am well aware, that the part thus given up may be so small, as to be no evidence whatever of a mind bent upon eternity. You may gratify your feelings of compassion at an expense so small, that you cannot be said to have made any sacrifice. You may gain the good-will of all your

neighbours by this act of kindness, and count the purchase a cheap one. You may gratify your love of ostentation by an act of alms-giving, and do it upon as easy terms, as you gratify your love of amusement by an act of attendance upon the ball-room or the theatre. You may lay out your penny a-week, and be amply repaid for the sacrifice, by the distinction of being one of a society, and by the pleasure of sharing in the business of it. In all this you have your reward; but I do not yet see any evidence of a soul setting its affections upon the things above in all this. Oh! no my brethren! A benevolent society is a very pleasurable exhibition; and I trust that in the one I am now pleading for, there is much of that genuine principle which shrinks from the pollution of vanity. But were I to bestow that praise upon the mere act which only belongs to the principle, I might incur all the guilt of a lying prophet. I might be saying "Peace peace when there is no peace." I might be proclaiming the praise of God, to him who had already sought and obtained his reward in the praise of man. I might be regaling with the full prospect of heaven, him whose heart tends to the earth, and is earthly —whose trifling charity has not the weight of a straw upon the luxury of his table, or the yearly amount of that accumulating wealth upon which he sets his confidence. Were I, my brethren, who have come from a distance, to adopt the language of a polite and insinuating flattery, and send you all away so safe and so satisfied with the charities you have performed—I might be doing as much mischief, as if I travelled the country, and revived

the old priestly trade of the sale of indulgences. None more ready than a Christian to enter into a scheme of benevolence; but let it never be forgotten, that a scheme of benevolence may be entered into by many, who fall miserably short of the altogether Christian. Oh what a multitude of men and of women may be found, who can give their pennies a-week with the hand, while their heart is still with the treasures of a perishable world. Our Saviour was rich and for our sake He became poor. Here was the extent of His sacrifice. Now we may give in a thousand directions for the sake of others; and yet be sensibly as rich as ever. I am not calling upon you to make any great or romantic sacrifice. I do not ask you, in deed and in performance, to forsake all; but I say that you are short of what you ought to be, if you are not in readiness to forsake all upon a clear warning. I say that you may give your name to every subscription-list, and bestow your something upon every petitioner; and yet stand at an infinite distance from the example you are called upon to imitate. The great point of inquiry should be, "Is the heart right with God?" Now I want to save you from a common delusion, when I tell you, that, out of your crumbs and fragments, many a Lazarus may be fed—while yet, like Dives, your heart may be wholly set upon the meat that perisheth. It is well, and very well, that you are a member of a benevolent society; and I shall rejoice to think of it as one of the smaller fruits of that mighty principle which brings the whole heart under its dominion —which makes you willing to renounce self and all

its earthly interests at the call of duty—which sinks the pursuits and enjoyments of time in the prospects of eternity—Such a principle as would not merely dictate the surrender of a penny for the poverty of a neighbour, but would dictate the surrender of every earthly distinction and enjoyment on the clear call of conscience or Revelation—Such a principle as has often been put to the trial in those woful seasons, when a sweeping tide of bankruptcy sets in upon a country; and the sanguine speculations of one man, on the false statements of another, have involved many an innocent sufferer, in the loss of all that belongs to him. Could I obtain a view of his heart now, I might collect a more satisfying evidence of the way in which it stands affected by the things of another world, than I possibly could do, from all the odd fractions of his wealth, which he made over to his poorer brethren in the day of prosperity. When stript bare of his earthly possessions, is the hope of eternity enough for him? Is his heart filled with the agonies of resentment and despair; or with peaceful resignation to the will of God, and charity to the human instrument of his sufferings? Now is the time for the fair trial of his principles; and now may we learn if to him belongs the blessedness of enduring it. And it will go further to prove his claim to the kingdom of heaven, than all the charities of his brighter days—if trust in Providence, and prayer for the forgiveness of those who have injured him, shall be found to occupy and to sustain his heart under the fallen fortunes of his family.

There may be no call upon you to surrender all,

in which case you are spared the very act of a surrender. But God who is the discerner of the heart, sees whether yours is in such a state of principle, as to be in readiness for the surrender, so soon as a clear requirement of conscience is upon you. Were persecution again to light up its fires in this land of quietness—it is to be hoped, that there are many who would cheerfully take the spoiling of their goods, rather than abandon the cause of the gospel. They have not the opportunity of manifesting themselves to the world; but the discerning eye of God stands in no need of such a manifestation. He can fathom all the secrecies of the inner man; and, in the great day of the revelation of hidden things, it will be seen who they are that would have forsaken all to follow after Christ.

Such as these, may have no opportunity of showing the whole extent of their devotion to Christ, by any actual performance. But though we cannot speak to their performance, we can speak to their principle. They sit loose to the interests of this world, and their heart is fully directed to the treasure which is in heaven. They have the willing mind; and, whenever their means and their opportunities allow, they will show that they have it. The thing given may be in itself so very small, as to be no evidence whatever of the preference of eternity over time. Think not then that by the giving of this thing, you will obtain heaven. Heaven, my brethren, is not so purchased. You are made meet for heaven by the Spirit working in your soul a conformity to the image of the

Saviour; and if the charity which filled his heart, actuate and inflame yours, it will carry you forward with a mighty impulse to every likely or practicable scheme for the interests of humanity, and for the alleviation of all its sufferings.

Before I pass on to the second head of discourse, I shall give my answer to a question, which may have been prompted by some of the observations I have already come forward with.

Does not the very object of this society, it may be asked, furnish the opportunity we are in quest of? May it not put the whole extent of a Christian's principles to the test? Has he it not in his power to forsake all in following the injunction of Christ, "Be willing to distribute, and ready to communicate"? What is to hinder him from selling all his goods to feed the poor? And if his penny a-week be no decisive evidence of the Christian principle which actuates him, may not the evidence be made still more decisive, by throwing his all into the treasury of our beneficence?

When a Christian has a clear and urgent call of conscience upon him, it is his duty to obey that call in the face of every sacrifice, however painful, and however mortifying. But it is also his duty to inform and to enlighten his conscience; and if, with this view, he were to cast about for advice, and do me the honour of making me one of his advisers, I would submit to him the following short representation.

There are many ways in which a man may show, that he has less value for this world's wealth, than his neighbours around him. Why? He may do

so by putting forth his hand to destroy it. He may set it on fire. He may strip himself of all that belongs to him by throwing it away; but none will give to such fanatical extravagancies as these, the credit which is only due to the spirit of love, and of power, and of a sound mind.

It is not enough, then, that you prove your indifference to this world's wealth by parting with it; you must have an object in parting with it, and the question is, what should that object be? Now the feeding of the poor is only one of the many objects, for which you are entrusted with the gifts of Providence. You are called upon to love your neighbour as yourself; but you are not called upon to love him better than yourself. Your own subsistence is an object, therefore, which it is not your duty to surrender. This is one limit; and there are many others. If you provide not for your own family, you are worse than an infidel. Your parents have a claim upon you. You may be rich; and though I do not speak of it as a positive duty, to maintain the rank and distinction which belong to you, yet you are allowed by Christianity to do so. The New Testament recognises the gradations of society; and it numbers the rich and the noble among the disciples of the Saviour. Add to all this, that if the whole disposable wealth of the country was turned to the one direction of feeding the poor—what would become of the others, ay, and of the worthier objects of Christian benevolence? Have not the poor souls as well as bodies? Must they not be taught as well as fed? Are the narrow limits of our own parish, or even our own island, to

be impassable barriers to our charity? Did not the same Saviour who said, Give to him that asketh, say also, Go and preach my gospel to every creature under heaven; and that the labourer is worthy of his hire? Those who cannot preach may at least hire; and if the whole stream of our disposable wealth were turned to the one object of relieving the temporal necessities of others—what would become of those sublime enterprises, by which, under the promise of heaven, we send the light of Christianity, and all its blessings, over the wide and dreary extent of that moral wilderness, that is everywhere around us—by which we carry the message of peace into the haunts of savages, and speed the arrival of those millennial days, when the sacred principles of good-will to men shall circulate through the world; and when the sun, from its rising to its going down, shall witness the people of all the countries it shines upon, to be the members of one great and universal family?

But more than this—if every shilling of the disposable wealth of the country, were given to feed the poor, it would create more poverty than it provides for. It would land us, in all the mischief of a depraved and beggarly population. That subsistence, which they could obtain from the prodigal and injudicious charity of others, they would never think of earning for themselves. Idleness and profligacy would lay hold of the great mass of our peasantry. Every honourable desire after independence, would be extinguished; and the people of the land, thrown loose from every call to the exertions of regular industry, would spread disorder

over the whole face of the country. It does not occur to the soft daughters of sensibility, but it is not on that account the less true; that if every purse were emptied in the cause of poverty—there would be more want and hunger and hardship in our neighbourhood, than there is at this moment. With the extension of your fund, you would just multiply the crowd of competitors—each pressing forward for his share, and jostling out his more modest and unobtrusive neighbour, who would be left to pine in secret over his untold and unnoticed indigence. The clamorous and undeserving poor, would in time spread themselves over the whole of that ground, which should only be occupied by the children of helplessness; and, after the expenditure of millions, it would be found that there was more unrelieved want, and more unsoftened wretchedness in the country, than ever.

II. I now come to a far more effectual check upon the mischiefs I have alluded to, than even the judgment and cautious inquiry of the giver. I proceed, in the second place, to the duties of those who are placed in such a situation of life, as to become receivers; and the first thing I have to propose to them is, that, if it be more blessed to give than to receive, then it is merely putting this assertion of my text into another form, when I say that it is less blessed to receive than to give. There may be something in this to startle and alarm the feelings of the poor. What! they may say, is our poverty a crime in the eye of Heaven? Are we to be punished for our circumstances?

Are we to be degraded into an inferior degree of blessedness, because our situation imposes upon us the painful necessity of receiving from another, what, with all our industry, we cannot earn for ourselves? We always understood the gospel to be a message of glad tidings to the poor; that its richest consolations were addressed to them; that through it God had chosen the poor of this world to be heirs of the promised kingdom—And shall we now be told, that the man who gives, because his situation enables him so to do, is more blessed than he who is forced by his situation to be a receiver?

In answer to this I have to observe, that man is neither punished nor rewarded for his circumstances —that the kingdom is only withheld from the rich, when they set their confidence and their affections on the world, and despise the offered salvation; and the poor obtain an interest in the gospel, not because they are poor, but it is because they are rich in faith, that they are heirs of that kingdom which God hath promised to them that love Him.

How often shall we have to repeat it, that it is not the deed of the hand that God looks to, but the dictate of the heart which gave rise to it? On this simple principle I undertake to prove, that the very poorest among you, though you have not a penny to bestow on the necessities of others, may obtain, not the lower blessedness of him who accepts of charity, but the higher blessedness of him who dispenses it; and that even though so humble in situation as to be a daily dependant on another's bounty, you may stand higher in the book of God's

remembrance, than even he whose liberality sustains you, and by the crumbs and fragments of whose table you are kept from starvation.

Let me first take the case of those poor, who are really not able to give; but who, by the struggles of a painful and honourable industry, have just kept themselves above the necessity of receiving. Had they been a little more idle, and a little more thriftless—a thing which very often they might easily have been without censure and without observation, they behoved to come upon your charity. They could have made good a legal claim to a part at least of their maintenance. They could have drawn a certain sum out of your poors'-fund. But no, they would not. Before they will take this sum they try what they can do by more work and better management. They will not take a fraction from you, so long as they can shift for themselves. They do as Paul the Apostle did before them; they labour with their own hands rather than be burdensome to others; and that sum which they might have gotten, they suffer you to keep entire for the relief of other wants still more urgent, and of other families still more helpless.

Now, the question I have to put to you is—"Who is the giver of this sum?" I may take a list of them. I may put down the names of the original contributors, who made it up by their pennies and their sixpences. But there is one name which does not appear in the catalogue, yet nobler than them all—even the hard-working and the honest-hearted labourer, who might have obtained the whole sum, but refused to touch a single

fraction of it—who shifted it from himself and let it pass unimpaired to the lightening of a burden still heavier than his own—who declined the offer; or to whom the offer was never made, because it was known to all, that his own hands ministered unto his own necessities. He is the giver of this sum. Others may have parted with it out of their abundance. But he has given it out of the sweat of his brow. He has risen up early and sat up late, that he might have it to bestow on a poorer than himself. It was first gotten from the easy liberalities of those who scarcely felt it to be a sacrifice. But it was gotten a second time out of the bones and muscles of a generous workman. I trust there are hundreds of such in this town and neighbourhood. I offer them the homage of my respectful congratulations; nor am I doing them a greater honour, than the sincerity of my admiration goes along with, when I say that they are the best friends of the poor, they are their kindest and most generous benefactors.

But let me go still further down—even to the case of those who are really not able to give; but who, burdened with the infirmities of age or of disease or of sickly and deformed children, have at length given way to the pressure of circumstances, and come under the painful necessity of receiving. They may still carry the same noble principle along with them; and though in outward deed, they are receivers—to them may belong all the generosity of the giver, and all his blessedness. You may not be able so to labour, as not to be burdensome; but all of you are able to do your best—and if you so

work and so manage, that you are as little burdensome as you can, your names may be recorded in the book of Heaven among the most benevolent of the species. I love the poor, and I have this very thing to record of them; and I have no doubt that there are some now present, who have witnessed it along with me. Have you never offered any of them a sum, out of the public charity; and received part of it back again? Our necessities force us to take something; but we shall not take to the whole extent of your offer. We request that you will keep a part, and leave us to make a fend with the remainder. Who, I ask again, has given me the sum that is so returned to me? Who is it that has fed the poor and clothed the naked out of it? To whose account am I to put down this sum, more honourable to him who has given it—than the golden donation to be seen on the forehead of many a subscription paper? O, it is easy for us who sit at our warm fire-sides, and our plentiful tables, to throw a gift into the treasury, and live as softly and luxuriously as ever; but when a man of poverty submits to voluntary hardships, and fears to be burdensome—he may have a receiving hand but he has a giving heart; and the eye of the great Discerner may there see the sacred principle of charity, in its purest and most heavenly exercise.

Now, it is not necessary to make the supposition of so much money being offered, and a part of it being given back again by each individual in these circumstances. Enough that the individual, by his labour and his frugality and his honest wish to serve others, makes a less sum necessary to be offered

than would otherwise have been sufficient for him. I trust that there are many such individuals; and be assured that though they get out of the parish fund, though they get out of the produce of your society, though they get out of the liberality of their wealthier acquaintances, though to the outward and undiscerning eye of the world they are one and all of them receivers—in the sight of that high and heavenly Witness who pondereth the heart of man, they are givers—they are put down as givers in the book of His remembrance—and, if what they do and suffer in this way be done unto Jesus and suffered for His sake—to them will be assigned all the blessedness of givers in the day of reckoning.

The duty which I am now pressing upon the poor of being as little burdensome as they can, is the very lesson to be drawn from the passage now before us. On what occasion is it that Paul says in my text—"It is more blessed to give than to receive"? It is true that he gave the people of Ephesus christian instruction, he ministered to them in spiritual things; but he is speaking of the way in which he obtained a temporal subsistence for himself and for his companions. In reference to meat and to clothing he did not give to the Ephesians; but he wrought for it to himself and his own company, and it was doing this which brought down upon him the blessedness of giving. Think not then, my brethren, that your poverty shuts you out from the same reward. Though you do not give with the hand, you may earn the blessedness of giving that Paul earned; and you may do it in the very same way that he did. You may covet no man's

silver or gold or apparel; and, in as far as age or disease or the pressure of a numerous and sickly offspring will let you, you may say with the apostle "Yea you yourselves know that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that are with me."

In this age of benevolent exertion, it is delightful to see the number of societies, and the ready encouragement which comes in upon them from the liberality of the public—an encouragement which I trust will never be withdrawn, till bibles are circulated through all countries, and till missionaries have planted in every land the faith of a crucified Saviour. But while witnessing the splendid names, and the princely donations which appear in the printed lists of these societies, I cannot forbear the reflection that there are many others whose labour of love is unnoticed and unrecorded, who will be registered in the book of heaven as fellow-helpers to the cause. There are poor who cannot afford to give; but who, struggling manfully with the necessity of their circumstances, keep themselves from being burdensome to others—and God, who judgeth righteously, will put down in part to their account, the sum which they have suffered to go untouched and unencroached upon to the interest of the Redeemer's kingdom. There are others who cannot afford to give; but who strive to the uttermost—and, by dint of sobriety and of frugal management, reduce the supply of charity to a sum as small as possible. God will not treat them as receivers. He will put down to their account all that they have saved to the givers; and He will

say, that, by the whole amount of what is thus saved, they have fed the stream of that benevolence which is directed to other objects. The contributors, whose names are presented every year to the eye of the public, are not the only contributors to our Bible and Missionary Societies. I could tell you of more; and though I cannot point my finger to those of them who occupy this town and neighbourhood, I am sure that many of my hearers can do it for me. There is the industrious labourer, who nobly clears his way among all the difficulties which surround him. There is the frugal housewife, who lends her important share to the interests of the young family. There is the servant who ministers out of her own wages—to those parents whom age has bowed down in helpless dependence upon the gratitude of their offspring. In the eye of the world, they may not have given a penny to the cause; but, substantially and in effect, they have supported it. They have circulated bibles; they have sent forth missionaries; through them the stream of Christian light has been poured more copiously on the wilds of Paganism; and many a converted Indian who meets them in heaven, will bear them witness, that they have added to the number of the redeemed by giving the message of peace a speedier circulation.

I now conclude, and I do it with one observation. Ask the giver if he would not feel more disposed to be liberal, and to open a wider hand to the distresses of those around him, were he assured that all he gave went to the alleviation of real distress. It is the experience of imposition which shuts many

a heart—and this is a lesson both to the receivers and the visitors of this society. How much is it in the power of the lower classes, to befriend their poorer brethren, by the rigid observance of the duty I have now been pressing upon them. They would bring down upon them an aid and a sympathy from the rich, which they have never yet experienced. The counterfeit and the worthless poor, do a world of mischief to the cause of beneficence. They obtain for themselves that, which the unfortunate and deserving poor should have gotten. And, what is still more than this, they stifle in the hearts of the rich, those emotions of sympathy which would otherwise have kindled in them. They throw the cold damp of suspicion over their charities. The money, which would have circulated as freely as the light of day among the habitations of the wretched, is detained, as by an iron grasp, in the hands of men who have at one time been misled by the dissimulations of the poor, and at another provoked by their ingratitude. Ye amiable and humane visitors of this society, it lies upon you to remedy this evil. Convince the givers around you, of the judicious application of the money in your hands; and more will flow in upon you. Be vigilant, be discerning, be impartial. Your judgment must be brought into action, as well as your sympathy. There is as much of the coolness of principle as of the high ecstacy of feeling in the benevolence of a Christian; and my prayer is, that the kind office you are engaged in may be blessed to your own souls—that a single aim to the glory of God may animate all your exertions—that the glittering

parade of ostentation may not deceive you—that, instead of seeking the honour which cometh from one another, you may seek the honour that cometh from God only—that the tenderness you feel for others, may be the genuine fruit of that spirit which is given to them who believe—that the labour you have undertaken may indeed be undertaken in the Lord—and then, I can assure you, it will not be in vain; and I call upon you to be stedfast and immovable, and always abounding therein.

To conclude. It is our duty to relieve actual suffering in all its forms; and, be it ignorance or disease or age or lunacy or hunger or nakedness, the claim upon our beneficence is made out in one and all of these cases, if it just be made out that they exist—and with the same tone of earnestness by which I call upon you to instruct the ignorant, and to harbour the deranged, and to minister to the diseased, do I call upon you to feed the hungry, and to clothe the naked, and to give of your abundance to him who is in need. There is no difference among all these cases in the obligation to grant relief; and the only difference I ever contended for, is in the way of going about it. Do the thing in such a way, as shall relieve the present case; and do not the thing in such a way, as shall have the effect of multiplying the future cases. Now you do not multiply the future cases of disease or derangement or dumbness or blindness, by giving the utmost publicity to your plans for relieving them, by pleading for them from the pulpit, by building hospitals and asylums, and blazoning the names and the payments of subscribers in the

columns of a newspaper. But you do multiply the future cases of indigence, by all this noise and all this parading, about a plan or a society which has for its object the general relief of indigence. And the plain cause of the difference between the former and the latter is, that a man almost never becomes a voluntary object for the charity of an hospital; but he may, and in point of fact he often does, become a voluntary object for the charity of alms: And therefore it is, that the less he knows about the existence of the last kind of charity the better; and a want of attention to this principle is, I am sorry to say, ripening or preparing the population of our great towns, for that system which now obtains with such full and mischievous operation in England—and that delicacy, to keep alive which Paul gave up a portion of his apostolical labours, a minister now-a-days is called upon also to leave his parish duties, but for the very different purpose of breaking it down: And thus it is, that, under the soft guise of humanity, a system may be instituted, which, with kindness for its principle, may carry cruelty in its operation—ay, and when the yearly assessment comes to be established, and the provision of a mistaken benevolence is made known, and the poor have found their way to it—they will set in upon you by thousands; and the money which is withheld from the endowment of more schools and more churches and more ministers to meet the moral and religious wants of an increasing population—will be as nothing to the hungry and unquenchable demands of a people, whom you have seduced from that principle of

independence which Christianity teaches, and which the despised exertions of the Christian minister alone can keep alive.

And is the cause of indigence then to be altogether abandoned? This does not follow. The duty of relieving want is unquestionable, but there is a way of going about it; and while I honestly wish it were carried to a tenfold greater extent than it is at this moment—all I contend for is, that it shall be invested with the good old scriptural attribute of secrecy. Let societies be multiplied and pled for and publicly made known for the improvement of the mind, and the relief of every one species of involuntary suffering—but do let the relief of want be more confided than it is, to the discernment and discretion and active benevolence of individuals. It is my earnest desire that every man among you were a Cornelius, and every woman among you were a Dorcas—but I should like the alms of the one unseen by human eye to ascend as a memorial before God; and the making of coats and garments by the other to remain unknown, till the hand of death shall discover it. Were every individual among you, to give up one-tenth of his income to the comfort of those in your neighbourhood, I am sure I should be among the first to rejoice; but let each of you give one-hundredth of his income to some published and proclaimed charity for bread to the hungry and clothing to the naked; and a fearful suspicion of the consequences would chill my every feeling of benevolent approbation. It is true that concert carries an advantage along with it; but is not concert

consistent with secrecy? Is it necessary that the trumpet be sounded upon the subject, either in the pulpit or out of it? Would not the gradual abolition of the public charities, for like the abolition of every established mischief I fear it must be gradual, give an impulse to individual benevolence to replace the want of them; and, after almsgiving had taken this salutary direction, are there not Christians to be found in every street, who, unknowing and unknown to all but themselves, could meet together in the name of Christ; and, under the eye of their heavenly Witness, could give their attention and their charity and their wisdom to that work and labour of love which he Has assigned to them?

I feel myself oppressed by the want of time and of space, for I am aware of many questions which I must leave unresolved behind me; but there is one which I cannot pass over. Does a published and proclaimed plan for the relief of orphans come under the animadversions which I have felt it my duty to advance, against any such plan for the relief of indigence in general? O no, my brethren. A public charity for the relief of general indigence, may tempt many a father to the relaxation of his industry, and many a mother to the relaxation of her management; but a charity for the relief of orphans will neither tempt the one nor the other to a voluntary martyrdom. Carry the former system to a certain extent; and you will witness many a parent providing not for those of his own house; but carry the latter system to the full extent of its object, and you never can have such a spectacle as this to freeze and to discourage you.

In the one case, many of the children you feed and you educate, may be devolved upon you by the wilful negligence of a parent. In the other case they are devolved upon you by the will of God. He has called away the parents to another scene; and He has left to you the care of their helpless family. If you are officious enough to do that which is more the duty of another, you may have performed his work; but by tempting him to a dereliction of his principles, you have done it at the expense of his soul. This language is surely not too strong, if by your injudicious charity you have made a single parent let down the industriousness of his habits—for by so doing you have made him worse than an infidel. But such is the wisdom of the object to which you have attached yourselves, that though you do all which you propose—you interfere with no man's duty; you tempt and you corrupt no parents, for alas, where are they?—you stifle no one feeling of parental tenderness, for this is what the cold hand of death hath already done —you withdraw no children from father's or mother's care, for fathers and mothers are by the mysterious Providence of God withdrawn from them: And that duty which at one time belonged to another, has become singly and entirely yours. O how I rejoice, when the lessons of wisdom are at one with the best and the most delightful of our sympathies—when compassion may give full vent to its tenderness, and no one principle or maxim of prudence is trenched upon—when the sweet movements of pity may be cherished and indulged to the uttermost, and truth brings no one severity

to scowl upon us, or tell us with stern authoritative voice that we expatiate on a forbidden territory. Keep by your professed object, my brethren; and if you do so, let your liberality know no other limit, than that the object be provided for. And let me not dismiss you, without at least an observation, which I pray God may bless by the enlightening influences of His Spirit, so as to undeceive many who build their confidence upon their charities. A man, under the impulse of natural feeling, may do many a deed of tenderness; and yet may have a mind totally unfurnished with a sense of God, and a life totally polluted by conformity to the world. It is well that God has provided society with so many natural securities for its existence, in the constitution of the members who compose it—just as it is well for the preservation of the other tribes of animals, that He has endowed them with the instinct of affection for their young. But ever remember that feeling is one thing and principle is another; and to give the stamp of religion to your doings, a sense of God and of His will, must mingle and give the tone and the direction to every one of them. And thus while it is true that part of pure religion and undefiled is to visit the fatherless and the widow in their affliction, it is only when this is done with a reference of the heart to God and the Father. And yet how many, because endowed with the constitutional tenderness, think that upon this single peculiarity, they may walk in the sight of their own eyes here, and be translated with all the waywardness of a heart alienated from God and devoted with every one of its affections to

the creature, to the joys and the rewards of an unfading hereafter: And therefore it is, that I call upon you not to put asunder what God has joined—not to found your confidence upon a single half-text of a record, which, in the vast majority of its contents, you despise and put away from you—not to open your eye to one clause of a verse, and shut your eye to the other clause of it; but know that pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visit the fatherless and the widows in their affliction and to keep yourselves unspotted from the world.

I have hitherto confined myself to general principles; but let me not forget the claims of that institution which I have been appointed to advocate before you. Nor have I forgotten them. In this age of benevolent institutions, when some of them are so legalized by the strong hand of authority, and some of them are so paraded before the eyes of the public, as to be counted upon by the receiver; as to tempt him from the virtue of the text; as to relax his economical habits, and of course to create and to multiply more cases of distress than it is in the power of all human contrivances ever to provide for—I say, in these circumstances, one feels a comfort in attaching himself to the cause of an endowment, which may be supported to any extent you please, without its ever being possible to realize the mischief I am now alluding to. Why, my brethren—the very confinement of the object to a limited number of families, is of itself a security, against that mischief which our

soundest economists apprehend from the number and the publicity of our benevolent institutions. Were the country, upon the spontaneous movement of its own kindly and religious feelings, to take upon itself the care of our destitute orphans, it just resolves itself into an augmentation of the clerical patrimony. It is only adding a little to the provision of the legislature in our behalf; and it is such an addition as will not give one single luxury to our table, or tempt us to the pride of life by enabling us to tack one vanity more to the splendour of our establishment. I am not aware of a single hurtful effect, that can be alleged against the charity for which I am contending. I know of nothing that should throw the cold damp of suspicion over it—and therefore it is that I feel no restraint whatever, in laying it before you as an open field, on which the benevolence of the public may expatiate, without fear and without encumbrance. It is true that the sympathies of a man are ever most alive to those distresses which may fall upon himself—and that it is for a minister to feel the deepest emotion, at the sad picture of the breaking up of a minister's family. When the sons and the daughters of clergymen are left to go, they know not whither, from the peacefulness of their father's dwelling—never were poor outcasts less prepared by the education and the habits of former years, for the scowl of an unpitying world; nor can I figure a drearier and more affecting contrast, than that which obtains between the blissful security of their earlier days, and the dark and unshielded condition, to which the hand of Providence has

now brought them. It is not necessary, for the purpose of awakening your sensibilities on this subject, to dwell upon every one circumstance of distress which enters into the sufferings of this bereaved family—or to tell you of the many friends they must abandon, and the many charms of that peaceful neighbourhood which they must quit for ever. But when they look abroad, and survey the innumerable beauties which the God of nature has scattered so profusely around them—when they see the sun throwing its unclouded splendours over the whole neighbourhood—when, on the fair side of the year, they behold the smiling aspect of the country; and at every footstep they take, some flower appears in its loveliness, or some bird offers its melody to delight them—when they see quietness on all the hills, and every field glowing in the pride and luxury of vegetation—when they see summer throwing its rich garment over this goodly scene of magnificence and glory, and think, in the bitterness of their souls, that this is the last summer which they shall ever witness, smiling on that scene which all the ties of habit and of affection have endeared to them—when this thought, melancholy as it is, is lost and overborne in the far darker melancholy of a father torn from their embrace, and a helpless family left to find their way unprotected and alone through the lowering futurity of this earthly pilgrimage—Do you wonder, that their feeling hearts should be ready to lose hold of the promise, that He who decks the lily fair in flowery pride, will guide them in safety through the world, and at last raise all who believe in Him to the

bloom and the vigour of immortality? The flowers of the field, they toil not, neither do they spin, yet your Heavenly Father careth for them—and how much more careth He for you, O ye of little faith.

O, it is kind in you, my brethren, to set yourselves forward as the instruments of this promise—to house these unprotected wanderers—to shield them from the blast they are far too soft and tender to endure—and to lighten the severity of that fall which they have suffered, by the premature loss of a father, who now only lives in the memory of a revering people, and the affections of a despairing family. Do, my brethren, give out of your abundance. You know not what the hand of death may ere long bring upon your own habitations. Work then while it is day; for the night cometh when no man can work. If the Discerner of the heart, who counts even a cup of cold water given to the least of His little ones, sees of your offering that it is done unto Him, and that it is for the love you bear His gospel, and the value you have for His ministers—if He can recognise it as the fruit of that mighty principle which purifies the heart, and sends forth the copious streams of all that is good and kind and generous into the walk and conversation, then verily I say unto you that you shall by no means lose your reward.

ON RELIGIOUS ESTABLISHMENTS:

A

SERMON,

PREACHED IN

ST. GEORGE'S CHURCH, EDINBURGH,

BEFORE

THE SOCIETY

FOR

THE DAUGHTERS OF THE CLERGY,

IN MAY, 1829.

SERMON XIII.

ON RELIGIOUS ESTABLISHMENTS.

And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also."—2 Timothy ii. 2.

The apostle, by this verse, makes provision for the continuance of a gospel ministry upon earth. If he do not enact the mode of succession for all ages, he at least exemplifies it from his own age, down to a third generation of Christian teachers in the church. He ordained Timothy to this office, who was also to ordain others—which last, we may well conjecture, were not only to minister, but in their turn to ordain ministers who might come after them. It must be acknowledged, however, that there is marvellously little of express enactment in Scripture for an ecclesiastical constitution; and that this fertile controversy chiefly turns upon apostolical example, and the lights of ecclesiastical history—thus leaving it more in the shape of an indeterminate or discretionary question, and to be decided by considerations of expediency—a term, which, in the Christian sense of the word, is of far loftier bearing than in the vulgar sense of it—as pointing, not to what makes most for the good of self or the good of society, but as pointing to what makes most for the prosperity of religion

in the world, for the extension and the glory of our Redeemer's kingdom. Expediency, wherewith we commonly associate a certain character of sordidness, instantly acquires a sacredness of character, when its objects are thus made sacred; and its high aim is more thoroughly to Christianize a land, and to ensure a fuller and more frequent circulation of the gospel among its families.

Now there is one question of ecclesiastical polity, which, in the lack of aught in the New Testament that is very distinct or authoritative upon the subject, we should feel much inclined to decide upon this ground—we mean the question of a religious establishment. The truth is, that Christianity, for three centuries, was left to find its own way in the world—for during the whole of that period, none of this world's princes did it reverence. All this time, it was treated as an unprotected outcast, or rather as a branded criminal. Yet the execrable superstition, as it was then called, neither withered under neglect, nor was quelled by the hand of persecuting violence. It grew and gathered into strength, under the terrible processes that were devised for its annihilation. Disgrace could not overbear it. Threats could not terrify it. Imprisonment could not stifle it. Exile could not rid the world of it, or chase the nuisance away. The fires of bloody martyrdom could not extinguish it. They could not all prevail against a religion, which had the blessing of heaven upon its head, and in its bosom the silent energies of conviction. And so it spread and multiplied among men. And, signal triumph of principle over power, of the

moral over the sentient and the grossly physical! was the indestructible church nurtured into might and magnitude, and settled more firmly on its basis, amid the various elements which had conspired for its overthrow. Throughout the whole transition —from the time that the fishermen of Galilee tended its infancy, to the time that the Emperors of Rome did homage to its wondrous manhood—it had neither the honours nor the revenues of an establishment. This change did not, and could not, originate with the ecclesiastical. It originated with the civil authority. It took effect by the state holding out to the church the right hand of fellowship. The advance was made by the former; and we should hold it tantamount to the vindication of a religious establishment, could we demonstrate, how, without the compromise of principle, but rather in obedience to its purest and highest behests, the advance might be met and consented to by the latter.

Let me suppose then a society of Christians, great or small, actuated, as Moravians now are, by the spirit and the zeal of devoted missionaries—pressed in conscience by the obligation of our Saviour's last saying, "Go and preach the gospel to every creature"—bent on an expedition to the heathen of distant lands, if they had but an opening for the voyage and the means of defraying it. Hitherto, it will be admitted, that all is purely apostolical; and that, as yet, no violence has been done to the high and heaven-born sanctities of the gospel. Now what we ask is, whether there be aught to vitiate this holy character, in the next

indispensable step of the means being provided; of money being raised, for the essential hire and maintenance of the labourers; of the vessel being equipped, that is to bear them onward in this errand of piety; of the wealth being transferred to their hands from the hands of willing contributors, for the support of the missionary household, for the erection of the missionary church and missionary dwelling-places. Is there aught of earthly contamination in this? Is the *Unitas Fratrum*, that church of spiritual men, at all brought down from its saintliness, by those annual supplies, without which their perils among the heathen could not have been encountered—their deeds of Christian heroism could not have been performed? They maintain their own independence as a church notwithstanding. Their doctrines and discipline and mode of worship, are left untouched by the proceeding. In all matters ecclesiastical, they take their own way. It is true they are subsisted by others; but in no one article, relating to the church's peculiar business, are they controlled by them. They are maintained from without; but they need not, because of this, suffer one taint of desecration within. There is a connexion, no doubt, established between two parties; but I can see nothing in it, save a pecuniary succour rendered upon one side, and a high service of philanthropy rendered upon the other—yet rendered according to the strict methods, and in rigid conformity with the most sacred principles of those who are embarked on this high and holy vocation. The transaction, as we now relate it, is of purest origin; and

has been nobly accredited by the blessed consequences which have followed in its train—for by means of these *hireling* labourers, the out-posts of Christianity have been pushed forward to the very outskirts of the human population; Christian villages have been reared in the farthest wilds of Paganism; the prowling savages of Greenland and Labrador have been reclaimed to the habits and the decencies of civilized life; and, greater far than any bliss or beauty which can be made to irradiate this fleeting pilgrimage, successive thousands of before untaught idolaters (under the effective tuition that has been brought to bear upon them) have lived in the obedience, and died in the triumphs of the faith.

Now the essential character of this whole transaction is the same—whether we conceive these gospel-labourers to be employed in the business of a home, or in the business of a foreign mission. By the one process, you carry the lessons of our religion beyond; by the other you circulate them within the territory of Christendom. The effect of the one is to spread Christianity externally abroad, and so perhaps as to sprinkle many nations. The effect of the other is to fill up the internal vacancies, and so perhaps as thoroughly to saturate with Christianity one nation. It is not enough reflected on, that, under the latter process, a vastly greater number of human spirits may be medicated into spiritual and immortal health, than under the former; and, at all events, that this latter also must have its accomplishment—ere the knowledge of the Lord shall fill the earth even as the waters,

which, in their collapse admit of no internal vacancy, cover the sea. But the position which I chiefly want to fix at present is, that, whether the missionary movement be in an outward or in a homeward direction, its whole economy and character may remain essentially the same. The enterprise may be supported in its expenses by one party. It may be executed in its work and labour by another party. Each may be distinct of the other, and give no disturbance to the other. The secular men may provide the means; yet the ecclesiastical men, in their proper department, may have the entire and uncontrolled management. They may take their support from others in things temporal; yet suffer no invasion by them, on their inviolable prerogative of determining and ordering in things spiritual. Their maintenance cometh from others; but their worship, and their creed, and their formularies, and their sacraments, and their ministrations, both of word and of ordinances, are all their own. We yet see no compromise of principle in such a connexion as this. There is support given upon the one side. But there is no surrender, in the least article either of faith or holiness, made upon the other side. The only submission that we can perceive on the part of these missionaries or ministers to other men, is a submission to be fed by them; and that, that they might wait without distraction on the business of their own unshackled and uncontrolled ministry. In this instance then, as in the former, there is the like pure origin, and there may be a like or perhaps a surpassingly-glorious result. If by the

foreign mission, stations are planted along the margin of our peopled earth—by the home mission stations may be multiplied over the territory of our own land. If, as the effect of the one, we now behold villages of peace and piety in the distant wilderness—as the effect of the other, the moral wilderness around us may be lighted up and fertilized; and we may be made to witness both a holier Sabbath and purer week-days than heretofore, in all our parishes. If, in virtue of the missionary doings abroad, we read that hundreds of families in some before untrodden field of heathenism have been Christianized—let us not forget, that many are the cities of our own island, where, without one mile of locomotion, we might have converse with thousands of families, which, but for the same doings at home, would be sunk in the apathy and the grossness of practical heathenism. If, as the fruit of the one service, we can appeal to humanized savages, and rudest wanderers of the desert, transformed into Christian and companionable men—let not the splendour of this achievement eclipse the equal importance of the other service, if we can appeal to an effectiveness as mighty and momentous, in our own cottage patriarchs, our own virtuous and well-taught peasantry.

Now, we think it is not by a fanciful, but by a sound generalization, that we pass from the case of a home mission, to that of an establishment—which is neither more nor less, in fact, than a universal home mission. At its first institution, in the days of Constantine, the very work remained to be done, which we have now specified. Its proper object,

is, not to extend Christianity into ulterior spaces, but thoroughly to fill up the space that had been already occupied. It is a far mightier achievement than may appear at first view, completely to overtake the whole length and breadth of a land. All the itineracies and the traverse movements of the many thousand missionaries, who, during the three first centuries, lived and died in the cause, fell short of this accomplishment. They did much in the work of spreading the gospel externally; but they left much undone in the work of spreading it internally. They had Christianized the thousands who lived in cities; but the millions of pagans, or of peasantry, who were yet unconverted, evince the country to have been every where a great moral fastness, which, till opened up by an establishment, would remain impregnable. Now this very opening was presented to the ministers of Christ, when the Roman Emperor, whether by a movement of faith or a movement of philanthropy and patriotism, made territorial distribution of these over his kingdoms and provinces; and, assigning a territorial revenue for the labourers of this extensive vineyard, enabled each to set himself down in his own little vicinity—the families of which he could assemble to the exercises of Christian piety on the Sabbath, and among whom he could expatiate through the week in all the offices and attentions of Christian kindness. Such an offer, whether Christianly or but politically made upon the one side, could most Christianly be accepted and rejoiced in by the other. It extended inconceivably the powers and the opportunities of usefulness. It brought the

gospel of Jesus Christ into contact with myriads more of imperishable spirits; and with as holy a fervour as ever gladdened the heart of the devoted missionary, when the means of an ampler service to the Redeemer's cause were put into his hands, might the church in these days have raised to heaven its orisons of purest gratitude, that kings at length had become its nursing fathers, and opened up to it the plenteous harvest of all their population. There is just as little of the essentially corrupt in this connexion between the church and the state, as there is in the connexion between a missionary board and its pecuniary supporters. Each is a case of the Earth helping the Woman; but, whatever of earthliness may be upon the one side, there might be none, and there needs be none, upon the other. The one may assist in things temporal—while the other may continue to assert its untouched and entire jurisdiction, as heretofore, in things spiritual. There might thus be an alliance between the Altar and the Throne—yet without the feculence of any earthly intermixture being at all engendered by it. The state avails itself of the church's services; and the church gives back again no other than the purest services of the sanctuary. Its single aim, as heretofore, is the preparation of citizens for heaven; but, in virtue of the blessings which Christianity scatters on its way, do the princes of this world find that these are the best citizens of earth—and that the cheap defence of nations, the best safeguard of their prosperity and their power, is a universal Christian education. There needs be nought, we repeat, of contamina-

tion in this. The state pays the church; yet the church, in the entire possession of all those privileges and powers which are strictly ecclesiastical, maintains the integrity of her faith and worship notwithstanding. She might be the same hallowed church, as when the fires of martyrdom were blazing around her—the same spirituality among her ministers—the same lofty independence in all her pulpits. The effect of an establishment is not necessarily to corrupt Christianity, but to extend it—not necessarily to vitiate the ministrations of the gospel, but certainly to disseminate those ministrations more intimately amongst, as well as to bear them more diffusively abroad over the families of the land.

But just as in philosophy and politics, there are mistakes upon this subject of a religious establishment, from the very common error of not assigning the right effect to its right cause. There is a kind of vague and general imagination, as if corruption were the invariable accompaniment of such an alliance between the civil and the ecclesiastical; and this has been greatly fostered, by the tremendously corrupt Popery, which followed in historical succession after the establishment of Christianity in the days of Constantine, and which certainly holds out, in vivid contrast, the difference between this religion in the period of its suffering, and this religion in the period of its security and triumph. But it were well to discriminate the precise origin of this frightful degeneracy. It arose not from without; it arose from within. It was not because of any ascendency by the state over the church

whom it now paid, and thereby trenched upon its independence in things spiritual. It was because of an ascendency by the church over the state, the effect of that superstitious terror which it wielded over the imaginations of men, and which it most unworthily prostituted to the usurpation of power in things temporal. The fear that many have of an establishment, is, lest through it, the state should obtain too great power over the church, and so be able to graft its own secularity, or its own spirit of worldliness, on the pure system of the gospel,—whereas the actual mischief of Popery, lay in the church having obtained too great power over the state; and in the false doctrines which it devised, to strengthen and perpetuate a temporal dominion which should never have been permitted to it. There is no analogy between the apprehended evils to Christianity from an establishment now-a-days, and the actual evils inflicted on Christianity by the corrupt and audacious hierarchy of Rome. The thing dreaded from that connexion between the church and state which an establishment implies, is lest the state, stepping beyond its own legitimate province, should make invasion upon the church; and so, by a heterogeneous ingredient from without, in some way adulterate the faith. The thing experienced, on the contrary, was that the church, stepping beyond its legitimate province, made an invasion upon the state; and all the adulteration practised, either on the worship or the lessons of Christianity, was gendered from within. So far from the state having too much power, so that it could make unlawful invasion

on the church—it had too little power, so that it could not resist the unlawful invasion made by the church upon itself. The theoretical fear is, lest the state should meddle with the prerogatives of the church; the historical fact is, that the church meddled with the prerogative of the state. So far from the apprehended corruption having experience to rest upon, it is precisely the reverse—of the actual corruption. But the truth is, that, after many conflicts, the matter is now better understood; and the understanding is, that neither should meddle with the prerogatives of the other. The state may pay the church; yet without conceding to it one particle of temporal sovereignty. The church may serve the state; yet without the surrender of one spiritual prerogative. To teach the people Christianity—that is the church's service. To teach them no other than what itself judges to be the Christianity of the Bible—that is the church's prerogative. To deal out among our parish families the lessons of faith and of holiness—this is the church's incumbent duty. But that these shall be no other than what itself judges to be the very lessons of that Scripture whose guidance in things spiritual it exclusively follows, and that in this judgment no power on earth shall control it,—this is the church's inviolable privilege. The state might maintain a scholastic establishment; but, without charging itself with the methods of ordinary education, leave these to the teachers. Or the state might maintain an ecclesiastical establishment; but, without charging itself with the methods of Christian education, leave these to the church. In

both cases, it would multiply and extend over the land the amount of instruction. Yet the kind of instruction it might leave to other authorities, to other boards of management than its own; and this were the way to secure the best scholarship, and the best Christianity. For the sake of an abundant gospel dispensation, we are upheld in things temporal by the state. For the sake of a pure gospel dispensation, we are left in things spiritual to ourselves; and on ourselves alone does it depend, whether the church now might not be the same saintly and unsullied church, that it was in the days of martyrdom—as spiritual in its creed, as purely apostolic in its spirit, as holy in all its services.

We will not allege the infallibility of our own church; for this were Popery though in the dress of Protestantism. We will not contend for the wisdom and the rectitude of all its doings; for we hold that there is neither individual nor corporate perfection upon the earth. But let the distinction be made between the acts of an establishment and the powers of an establishment; and we know not, if, through the whole of Christendom, there be one more happily devised in any other country for the religious good of its population. The fitness of a machine is one thing; the working of it is another. We feel as if it were no more than a warrantable confidence, when we stand up for the former—though we should feel it a most tremendous presumption, did we, in every instance and upon all occasions, stand up for the latter. In regard to the fitness of the mechanism, it may be the best

possible. In regard to the actual working of the mechanism, one would need to side with all the majorities which have occurred for two centuries, and under all the changes of ecclesiastical policy, ere he could conscientiously affirm, that it has at all times been the best possible. Still, amid all the imputations and the errors which its greatest enemies may have laid to its door, we hold, that, upon the alternative of its existence or non-existence, there would hang a most fearful odds to the Christianity of Scotland. Let us admit it as true, that the apparatus might be made greatly more effective,—still it is true that a deadly effect would follow, and be felt to her remotest parishes, were the apparatus taken down. It were tantamount to a moral blight over the length and breadth of our land; and though we have not time to demonstrate, what now we have only time to affirm—yet, with all the certainty of experimental demonstration we say it, that the ministrations of our church then done away would never be replaced, to within a tenth of their efficacy, by all the zeal and energy and talent of private adventurers. There would arise no compensation for the present regular supply. There would arise no compensation for its fulness. Instead of the frequent Parish Church (that most beauteous of all spectacles to a truly Scottish heart, because to him the richest in moral association; and to whom therefore its belfrey, peeping forth from among the thick verdure of the trees which embosom it, is the sweetest and the fairest object in the landscape)—instead of this, we should behold the bare and thinly-scattered

meeting-houses. For the large intervening spaces, we should have nothing but precarious and transient itinerancies to trust to. The well established habit of Sabbath attendance, now as constant with many of our families as the weekly recurrence of the parish bell, would necessarily disappear. In a moral sense, they would become the waste and the howling wildernesses of Scotland. We feel quite assured, that, under this withering deprivation, a hard and outlandish aspect would gather on the face of our people. The cities might be somewhat served as heretofore, but the innumerable hamlets would be forsaken; and, just as it was anterior to an establishment at all, our peasants would again become Pagans, or, under the name and the naked ritual of Christianity, would sink into the blindness and the brutality and the sad alienation of Paganism.

But, without enlarging on this consideration, in which however there lies much of the strength of our cause, let us briefly recur to the leading argument of the day. It is not true that corruption must adhere, in virtue of its very nature and as by necessity, to an establishment. There will be corruption in fact; but rightly to estimate the quarter it comes from, distinction should be made between the nature of the institution and the nature of man. In virtue of the former, there may be no contamination; while in virtue of the latter, there may be a great deal. An establishment may in this case be the occasional, but not the efficient cause of mischief. The machine may be faultless; but exposed, as it must be, while the species lasts, to the

intromission of hands, which to a certain degree will taint and vitiate all that they come in contact with. The remedy is not to demolish the machine, and transfer the hands which wrought it to other managements and other modes of operation—There will still be corruption notwithstanding. It will prove a vain attempt at escape, if you think to make it good by transferring human nature from the economy of an establishment to the economy of any of our sectaries. The human nature which you thus transfer, will carry its own virus along with it; and, while that nature remains there will be corruption in both, and which is strictly chargeable neither on the one economy nor on the other. It follows not therefore, because of this one or that other abuse, that the framework of our establishment should be destroyed. To make head against an abuse, we should direct our efforts to the place where the abuse originated—not to the machinery therefore in the present instance but to the men who work the machinery. It is not to a constitutional or political change in any of our establishments, that we should look for the coming regeneration of our land. It is to a moral and spiritual change in those who administer them. It is there, and not in the framework, where the change and the correction ought to be made. This is the way by which to get rid of corruption, and not by putting forth upon our national institutions the innovating hand of a destroyer. There is corruption in the civil government of our empire—yet that is no reason why it should be brought to dissolution. There is corruption in the municipal government of our

towns—yet what fearful anarchy would ensue, should that be made the pretext for another overthrow; and every populous community in our land were left without a presiding magistracy to check and to control them. There is corruption, we will say it, in every family government throughout the nation—yet who can tell the numerous ills that would fester in every household, and flow over in innumerable streams upon society, were the rights and the restraints of parental authority therefore put an end to? And there may be corruption in the ecclesiastical government of our own church. This may be true, and yet it be just as true, that if, either by the policy of infatuated rulers or by the frenzy of an infatuated people, this church were swept away—it would inflict a most deleterious blow on the character of Scotland and the Christianity of Scotland's families. It is not by the violence of public hostility against our church that the nation is to be reformed—it is rather by the control of the public opinion upon her ministers; and most of all, by the answer from Heaven to the people's prayers, that her priests may be clothed with salvation. Were the establishment, and that, too, under the pretext of its corruption, destroyed—this would do nothing, and worse than nothing. Were the establishment, either in the whole or in certain parts of its constitution reformed—this, of itself, would do little; and so little, as to stamp insignificance on many a contest of ecclesiastical policy. Were the establishment to have the spirit of God poured forth upon its clergy—then, with the multiplication of its churches and parishes made more commensurate to

the wants of our increasing population—this, and this alone, would do every thing. A conscientious minister, even with the establishment precisely as it is, has within its borders, the liberty and the privilege of unbounded usefulness. He has scope and outlet there, for the largest desires of Christian philanthropy. He has a parish within which he might multiply his assiduities at pleasure; and with no other control, but of the word of God over his doctrines and his services and his prayers. Should he quarrel with the reigning policy of our church, he has a place for the utterance of his testimony, against all he might esteem to be its defections and its errors. He can give his eloquence and his vote to the strength of its minorities. He can by the contribution of his own name, and of his own proclaimed or recorded opinion, add to the moral force which always lies in an opposition of principle, and which numbers cannot overbear. All this he may do, and without forfeiting the respect, nay even the kindness, of his adversaries. But to go back from the courts of our establishment to its parishes, where after all he is on his best vantage-ground for the services of Christian patriotism, he can there expatiate without restraint in all the deeds and the devices of highest usefulness. It is on this precious homewalk of piety and peace, that he can acquit himself of his noblest ministrations for the interests of our immortal nature, and the good of human society. It is there where he sheds the purest influences around him, whether by the holiness of his pulpit or the kindness of his household ministrations. I cannot imagine a stronger yet happier ascendant, than that which

belongs to a parish minister, who, throned in the cordialities of his people, finds unbounded welcome at every cottage door; and by his unwearied attention at sicknesses and deaths and funerals, has implicated the very sound of his name and idea of his person with the dearest interests of families. We positively know not, if any where else than under this mild patriarchal economy, a scene of so much moral loveliness can be found—or one where the hopes of heaven, and the best and kindest affections of earth, are so beautifully blended to uphold a system which covers all the land with so bland and benignant an economy as this, may well be termed the cheap defence of the nation. To uproot it, is the Gothic imagination of certain unfeeling calculators, whose sole principle, in the science of their politics, is a heartless arithmetic; but who, in the midst of their plodding computations, have overlooked what that is which constitutes the chief element of a nation's prosperity and a nation's greatness.

It is our part to vindicate the worth and importance of a church establishment to society; and this is best done by the worth and importance of our services. This will form our best security, infinitely better than any which statesmen can devise. There were certain recent alarms in which I could not participate, because I felt that any apprehended danger from without, might be greatly more than counteracted by a moral defence from within. This is the reaction by which we have hitherto stood our ground, against infidelity on the one hand and sectarianism on the other; and with such an

effect, that, with enough of energy and conscientiousness and enlightened zeal on the part of her ministers, all the menaces and agitation by which we are surrounded, will only rivet the Church of Scotland more firmly upon her basis, and rally more closely around her cause the wise and the good of our nation.

In regard to an establishment, it makes all the difference in the world to a conscientious man, whether it exposes the church to the evil of an overbearing constraint from without; or, in common with every other Christian society, to the evil of a spontaneous corruption from within its own bosom. If not to the former, he may carry entire into the establishment, all his powers and his liberty of usefulness. If only to the latter, he may personally have no share in the corruption; and politically, if such be the constitution of the church that he is vested with the privilege, he may resist, and if overcome, may lift his testimony against it. In all these respects, we know of nothing more perfect than the constitution of the Church of Scotland. There is, to each of its members, an independent voice from within; and from without there is no force or authority whatever in matters ecclesiastical. They who feel dislike to an establishment, do so in general because of their recoil from all contact and communication with the state. We have no other communication with the state than that of being maintained by it—after which we are left to regulate the proceedings of our great home mission, with all the purity and the piety and the independence of any missionary board. We are

exposed to nothing from without, which can violate the sanctity of the apostolical character, if ourselves do not violate it. And neither are we exposed to aught, which can trench on the authority of the apostolical office, if ourselves we make no surrender of it. In things ecclesiastical we decide all. Some of these things may be done wrong; but still they are our majorities which do it. They are not, they cannot, be forced upon us from without. We own no head of the church but the Lord Jesus Christ. Whatever is done ecclesiastically is done by our ministers, acting in His name, and in profest submission to His authority. Implicated as the church and the state are imagined to be, they are not so implicated, as that, without the concurrence of the ecclesiastical courts, a full and final effect can be given to any proceeding, by which the good of Christianity and the religion of our people may be affected. There is not a clerical appointment, which can take place in any of our parishes, till we have sustained it. Even the law of patronage, right or wrong, is in force not by the power of the state, but by the permission of the church; and, with all its fancied omnipotence, has no other basis than that of our majorities to rest upon. It should never be forgotten, that, in things ecclesiastical, the highest power of our church is amenable to no higher power on earth for its decisions. It can exclude, it can deprive, it can depose at pleasure. External force might make an obnoxious individual the holder of a benefice; but there is no external force in these realms, that could make him a minister of the Church of Scot-

land. There is not one thing which the state can do to our independent and indestructible church, but strip her of its temporalities. "*Nec tamen consumebatur*," she would remain a church notwithstanding—stronger than ever, in the props of her own moral and inherent greatness; and, at least strong as ever, in the reverence of her country's population—she was as much a church in her days of suffering, as in her days of outward security and triumph—when a wandering outcast, with nought but the mountain breezes to play around her, and nought but the caves of the earth to shelter her, as now when admitted to the bowers of an establishment. The magistrate might withdraw his protection; and she cease to be an establishment any longer—but in all the high matters of sacred and spiritual jurisdiction, she would be the same as before. With or without an establishment, she, in these, is the unfettered mistress of her doings. The King by himself, or by his representative, might be a looker-on; but more, the King cannot, the King dare not.

But we gladly bring our argument to a close. It has been well remarked, that, in the abstract discussion of rights between which there may be collision, it is difficult to avoid a certain tone of harshness—a spirit the most unlike possible to that which should be, and indeed to that which actually is, in real and living exemplification. The vindication of our establishment, as far as we have proceeded in it, necessarily involves the vindication of our order from the charge—that, because supported by the state, we are therefore as if by neces-

sary consequence, a mean and mercenary priesthood. In repelling this, we cannot but assert the real independence which belongs to us; but let not the assertion of our independence be interpreted into an assertion of disrespect or defiance. What we say and say truly in the abstract, may in the concrete be never realized; and for this best and most desirable of all reasons, that the one party might never be put on the hardy and resolute defence of its prerogative, just because the other party may never have the wish or the thought to invade it. There is many an ancient and venerable possession in our land, whose rights are never called forth from their depository, or produced in court—just because they are never trampled on. And so of the rights of our church—there might be no call for the parade or for the production of them, just because there might be no contest; and we are left to the undisturbed exercise of every power which legitimately belongs to us. It is thus that for centuries, nay for a whole millennium, we can imagine a prosperous and a pacific union, between the church on the one hand and the state upon the other—a union most fruitful in blessings to both—the church rendering to the state that most precious of all services, the rearing of a virtuous and orderly and loyal population; and the state giving tenfold extent and efficacy to the labours of the church, by multiplying and upholding its stations all over the lands, and providing it in fact with approaches to the door of every family. There is here no compromise of sound principle on the part of the church—for it is not in drivelling submission

to the authority of man, it is in devout submission to the high authority of Heaven, that we tell our people to honour the king, to obey magistrates, to lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty, and meddle not with them who are given to change. Neither is there any compromise of sound policy on the part of the state—for the Christian education of the people, is the high road to all the best objects of patriotism. In such an intercourse of benefits as this, there needs not, we repeat it, be so much as a taint of worldliness. We may retain entire our apostolic fervour and our apostolic simplicity notwithstanding—pure as in the season of our most dark and trying ordeals—equally pure in the sunshine of blandness and cordiality, between a Christian church and an enlightened Government.

END OF VOLUME ELEVEN.

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